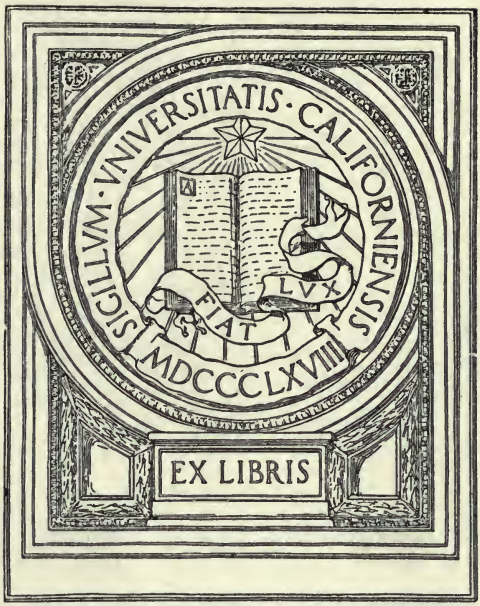
CAMERTON SLOPE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A merry Christmas
To Guy. 1893.

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CALLING THE ROLL.

See page 128.

CAMERTON SLOPE

A STORY OF MINING LIFE

BY

REV. R. F. BISHOP

OF THE OHIO CONFERENCE

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PREFACE.

THE writer of the following pages was reared in a mining community, and at an early age entered the mines as a driver. What is recorded in these chapters may serve as the token of his abiding sympathy and true, brotherly feeling for all who toil in any capacity in the darkness and danger of underground life. After a somewhat extended acquaintance with men in various departments of life and labor, the author wishes here to record the fact that he has found no more genial and lasting friendships, no truer, sturdier types of manhood, no loftier ideals of pure Christian character, than among his chums and associates of "auld lang syne."

The facts relating to the Mollie Maguire con-

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spiracy are derived in part from the current news of that day, but chiefly from the record of the court proceedings, and from Allan Pinkerton's narrative of the part taken by his organization in hunting down this "midnight, dark-lantern, murderous-minded fraternity."

R. F. BISHOP.

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CAMERTON SLOPE.

Chapter I.

MAC CASTLE AND ARCHIE ATKINS.

IN the coal-basin of Western Pennsylvania, near the point where the noisy John's Creek tumbles with a kind of reckless haste out of the narrow valley which has confined it for several miles, two boys were leisurely working their way up the uncertain path that led to the top of the rugged mountain which bore the same name. The ascent was difficult, and in places, where the mountain presented its rocky ribs with perpendicular and defiant attitude in the face of the traveler, it was quite dangerous, and only a doubtful hold could be had for the hands and feet in the effort to climb. The path was traveled only by hunters and the more adventurous

of the young men and boys who liked the excitement of such a trip, or who wished to save the time required to reach the same point by the long laps and windings of the county road.

"Now, Archie, you go first," said the older of the two boys, when they came to the most difficult place in the ascent; "you go first, and I'll come behind, and catch you if you slip."

There was scarcely more than a year's difference in the age of the two boys, but the difference in size was very considerable. McKenzie Castle, the speaker, was fifteen years old. He was taller and of heavier build than his younger companion, Archie Atkins.

The place where they now were was known as "the Welshman's Pass." It was a very steep and narrow passageway between perpendicular, high walls on either hand. The bottom surface had a sort of glassy smoothness, on which it was impossible to stand, and the ordinary method of making the ascent was by bracing the body against the walls, and making use of every little crevice and unevenness where the crawler could get a hold with his hands to assist his body forward. The two adventurers had gotten about half-way through the pass when, all at once, they were greeted with a shower of pebbles and small stones that descended from the top of the pass, accompanied with shouts of derisive laughter

and the sound of scampering feet, which plainly told that the authors of this unprovoked assault wished to remain undiscovered.

"Archie, are you hit?" cried Mac.

"Yes," was the response; "but I guess I'm not much hurt."

This was bravely said, but the upturned face of the speaker was bleeding from a considerable gash made by a sharp stone. Mac had been struck too, about the shoulders and back, but was very little hurt. It was well that he was able to give some assistance to his companion; for Archie was pretty well stunned by the blows upon his head and face.

"I'll bet I know the scalawags that did that," said Mac; "and if I find 'em when I get out of here, I'll wax 'em good. They might 'a' killed us both in here, and we could n't do a thing to help ourselves."

A few minutes later the boys were out of the Pass, and sharply looking about them on the higher ground above; but no trace of their assailants was visible, and as the innumerable rocks at no great distance afforded so many safe hiding-places, it seemed a sheer waste of time to search for them. So they sat down on the little patch of green to rest and enjoy the rugged grandeur of the scene before them.

It was not often that they had such an oppor-

tunity. Their daily work in the mine knew no cessation for months at a time, unless some holiday season, or an unlooked-for accident, gave them a day or two of freedom. It was to the breaking of the wire rope, which drew the loaded coal-cars out of the mine, that they were indebted for the chance of the present excursion. The entrance to the Camerton mine, in which the boys worked, was by a slope, or a steep descent into the earth. A powerful engine, stationed a few rods from the mouth of the slope, drew the loaded cars of coal out of the mine by means of an endless wire rope, to which each separate car was attached by means of a clutch. The rope, after coiling about various big pulleys in the engine-house, re-entered the mine, taking with it the empty cars upon another track parallel with the one occupied by the loaded cars, so that the empty cars entering the mines, passed close beside the loaded ones coming out.

The breaking of the rope, which occurred the evening before, had precipitated half a dozen of the loaded mine-cars back again down the steep grade, with a violence that caused them to leave the track as the rope became coiled about the wheels. Several of the cars were piled one upon the other, just as sometimes happens in a wreck or collision between two railroad trains. Happily, no one was hurt. All that night and

all the next day were occupied in clearing up the wreck, splicing the broken rope, and putting things to rights, so the mining could go on again as usual. This breathing spell of one day was greatly enjoyed by the several hundred men and boys employed in the Camerton mine. While the seniors worked their gardens, and did up the various chores about home, or simply enjoyed the grateful rest, the boys in general went fishing and swimming, or roamed the country over, after the manner of Mac Castle and Archie Atkins.

The two boys were amply repaid for their struggle up the mountain, in the scene which met their view as they seated themselves on the inviting mossy cushions which decorated the rocks above the Welshman's Pass. Hundreds of feet below them in the valley, the rapid little stream glittering in the sunlight, as it threaded its way among the rocks, assumed the appearance of a serpent hastening to overtake his prey, while the sharp yet regular slope of the opposite mountain was lined from bottom to top with a thick covering of rocks, which seemed to have been broken to a given size, and dumped from the crown of the mountain so as to cover from view almost every foot of earth, and afford scarcely a single spot for verdure. Yet in spite of this seeming purpose, a scrubby pine here

and there struggled upward through the rocks, and persisted in its right to live. At the head of the valley northward, the mining village of Camerton, where they lived, lay half concealed among the trees, which formed a kind of grove at the entrance of the village.

"Mac," said Archie, after they had feasted their eyes awhile on the familiar yet ever inviting scene before them, "what are you going to do with yourself when you get older? Are you always going to stay in the mines?"

"Don't know as I've thought much about it, Archie. What else is there for a fellow to do?"

"There's lots of room in this big world for other people besides miners," said the younger boy, as he looked abstractedly across to the opposite mountain.

"Lots of room!" replied Mac. "Yes, that's so; but there's plenty o' fellows crowdin' into all the soft places, and there ain't no chance for chaps like us."

"I've been reading a story lately that's made me think there's a chance for every fellow, if he'll only take it," said Archie.

"I wish I liked to read as well as you do, Archie."

"The story," continued the other, "was about a boy that worked in a flour-mill—worked right hard too, almost night and day. Got the mean-

est kind of treatment from his boss, and couldn't make anything like the wages we do in the mines; but he studied some in the mill, and saved up his money till he had enough to take him through school, and then he got to be a big man."

"That's what you'll do some day, Archie; and I'll be peggin' away in these blamed old mines. Wish I took to books and such things just like you do. I was in school before you was, but I didn't learn a thing till you came in and helped me. I'll never forget the day you first came. You wasn't any bigger than a tom-tit, but you very soon knocked the spots off a lot of us big fellows."

"I didn't do any more than you could have done, Mac, if you had only stuck to it like I did."

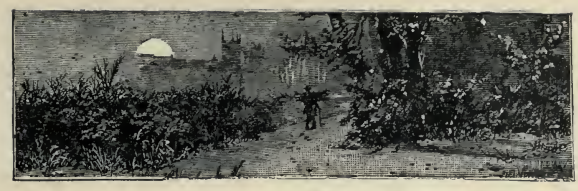
"Yes, you did. You had a kind o' gift about books that put you away ahead o' some o' the rest of us, even if we'd done our best. But I didn't like school, and I guess that's the reason I fooled the time away like I did. I was glad when pap let me go to work, but I'm mighty sorry I didn't get a little learnin' first."

"I've been thinking, Mac, that we might get up a night-school. They have one over at Hawksville, and lots of fellows go to it."

"Good enough," replied Mac; "but I'm afraid

there isn't many chaps about these diggin's that would go to it. You might try your hand on Tim McCoy and his gang. I'll bet a quarter it was some o' that crowd that put that beauty-spot on your cheek just now. They need some schoolin' mighty bad, they do."

After spending most of the afternoon in their ramble, and eating their fill of blackberries that grew so plentifully upon the almost inaccessible heights, Mac and Archie descended the mountain by the same path they had followed in going up. Passing by the mine, they learned that the repairs were almost finished, and that work would be resumed as usual the next morning.



Chapter II.

TIM McCOY AND SAM SMALLWOOD.

ONE of the notable characters of Camerton was Pat McCoy. He had taken advantage of his day off to begin another of his periodical sprees. They didn't come as often as with some of the other miners—sometimes for months together Pat McCoy would not taste a drop of liquor—but what his sprees lacked in frequency was fully made up in their length and violence. After a sober spell, one drink of Barney Dillon's whisky was sufficient to overthrow the balance of reason, and make him clamorous for more, and each successive dram had power to stir to fiercer depths the tide of angry and vindictive passion which seemed to slumber in his sober periods.

Pat and a number of his cronies met at Barney Dillon's saloon about the middle of the forenoon, to spend the day after a fashion that had become very common with them on holiday occasions.

Tim McCoy was Pat's oldest son. He had begun at an early age to walk in his father's footsteps, and on this occasion was not long in deciding how the idle day should be spent. Before breakfast he had called at Dillon's to get a bottle of whisky.

"Now, Barney," said he, as he laid down the money, "don't let the old man know anything about this. He'll be after getting himself as full as a tick to-day, but he'd take the hide off me if he knowed I got this."

"Kape yersilf aisy about that, me boy," said the man behind the bar, putting on his professional smile. "Niver a word will he know uv it."

Tim gathered up a few of his associates during the morning, and arranged with them for a trip on the mountain.

"Agreed," said Sam Smallwood, his particular friend. "Seein' that you've got the whisky, Tim, I'll get the cigars, and we'll have a high old time."

Three other boys were also invited, the youngest of whom, Chris Fannon, evidently thought it no small honor to be associated with daring spirits like Tim McCoy and Sam Smallwood in such an expedition.

In age and size there was little difference between the two elder boys; but in all their various schemes of amusement Tim McCoy

was the real leader. He was the more fertile in suggestion, nor was he wanting in the rude courage necessary to the execution of their common plots.

"We 'll have lots o' fun out o' Chris to-day," said Tim, aside to Sam, after they had started. "We 'll make him as drunk as a fool. He 's fresh, he is; he do n't know the taste uv whisky from soda-water."

"Right you are," replied Sam with a laugh; "we 'll go light ourselves, and let the small-fry have a fillin' up that 'll do 'em good."

When they were well out of sight of the village, the bottle was passed around, "for refreshment," as Sam said. Tim and Sam merely tasted the liquor, and then passed the bottle on to the others.

"We 've got a hard climb before us, Christy," said Tim; "take a good pull, an' it 'll help ye. Ye do n't want to be laggin' behind."

Chris drank to the satisfaction of his comrades, though the terrible stuff took his breath away, and started the tears from his eyes. While the party were resting at the top of the Welshman's Pass, one of the boys cried out:

"There comes Arch Atkins and Mac Castle!"

"Them 's our enemies, gentlemen," said Tim, as he rose up to get a good look at them. "Let 's prepare to give 'em a salute." So say-

ing, he gathered up a handful of stones, and his example was followed by the others.

"Fire when I give the word," said Tim, "and then fall back. We don't want the white-livered puppies to know who done it."

The injuries inflicted were, as we have seen, not very serious; but this was due to projections in the walls of the Pass here and there, which made it impossible to take aim. After finding a secure place of retreat, overlooking the top of the Pass, Sam called again for "refreshments," and the bottle made its second round. Again the older boys merely put the bottle to their lips, while they encouraged the younger ones to take a hearty dram. Sam then passed the cigars, and Tim and he began to air their jests at the expense of Chris Fannon and one of the other boys, on whom the effect of the liquor began to be visible. Chris became heavy and stupid, and said but little. His sickly smile and ludicrous attempt to reply to the sallies of his companions drew forth repeated guffaws of laughter. The other boy, who had imbibed equally with Chris, was named Fritz Sypher. He became very hilarious and boisterous. He sang several songs, and extemporized a few sentences at the end of one of them in praise of the drink and of the generous bounty of Tim and Sam, who had provided the entertainment for them.

"Hurrah for Tim and Sam!" said the three younger boys at the close of the song; "hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!"

"Be quiet now wid yer hurrahin," said Tim, with becoming modesty. "Do yez think we want any praise for takin' a hand in yer edication?"

"We 've bin in this bizness a good while afore to-day," interposed Sam, "and brought out lots o' young cubs."

This was said with a kind of severe dignity, well calculated to impress the juveniles with a sense of the importance of the two leaders.

"Now, boys, listen to me," said Tim, as he puffed vigorously at the stump of his cigar. "Over beyont the ridge there, about a mile," pointing with his hand, "old Jerry Coulehan, that used to work along side us in the slope, is carryin' on a bit uv a farm. I 'm thinkin' it 's time we was payin' him the honor uv a visit."

"That 's so," said a chorus of voices.

"I went to see him onc't," continued Tim, "like one gentleman should go to see another; an' he gave me a couple uv old rotten apples that would sicken a hog to look at; an' when I axed him for a drink o' milk, 'Tim,' sez he, 'I sells all my milk, and won't have a drop till milkin' time again.' The ould beast was lyin'; uv course he was. I 've kept the thing in mind this year back; and now, gentlemen, if yez are

all agreed to it, we 'll try the apples in his orchard, and see what he 's got in the springhouse, widout waitin' to ax his leave."

"Lead on, Tim," said Smallwood, as they all rose to their feet; "lead on, Mr. McCoy, and we 'll stand to yer back till the last horn blows."

"But what if old Jerry sets the dogs on us?" said one of the boys.

"I'll do the argifyin wi' the dogs," replied Tim, as he picked up the heavy, knotted cane which he had used as a walking-stick in climbing the mountain.

Their progress was slow. Added to the difficulties of the path was the task of helping the two boys, who were too drunk to keep their feet on level ground.

"Stand up here, Chris," said Sam; "what 's the matter with them pins o' yourn? Don't disgrace the whole crowd o' us when we 're goin' to pay a visit o' ceremony to an old man. Put on yer manners, and walk straight."

Tim used similar efforts with Fritz. Presently they reached the smoother ground in the vicinity of Coulehan's farm, and then their progress was easier. When they came in sight of the house they made a considerable circuit, so as to reach the orchard unobserved. Here they had their fill of apples in safety.

"Tim," said Sam, "I guess we 'd better give

up that spring-house business; it's too dog'd near the house."

"That's where the fun comes in, man," said Tim. "We'll take them kids out the way a piece first, and then me an' you 'll advance an' sample the milk."

The two tipsy boys were conveyed to a safe distance from the scene, and left in charge of Joe Andree, who was sober enough to be satisfied with this safer position, though he had some difficulty in persuading Chris to remain with him.

When Tim and Sam reached the point where they could be seen by any one on the lookout at the house, they got down on all fours and crawled through the tall grass and rushes of a marsh that lay between them and the spring-house. Reaching the latter in safety, they had no difficulty in entering unobserved. Several pans of milk, and a number of tempting prints of butter just ready for market, met their gaze as soon as they were fairly on the inside.

"We're in luck, Sam," said Tim, in an undertone, as he lifted a pan of milk to his mouth. "Here's a gallon apiece for us; an' it's mighty kind in them to leave us yon tin bucket. We'll take a sup to the kids in it."

"We'll take a taste o' the old woman's butter along, too," said Sam. "If she knew she

was goin' to have company, I guess she'd 'a' set out the bread to go with it."

Taking the bucket of milk and several prints of butter, they set out to return; but ere they could reach the protection of the tall grass, they were startled by the low growl of a dog, which was changed quickly to a series of sharp barks.

"Confound his ugly picture," said Sam; "I just expected that."

Old Jerry was away from home, but the barking of the dog called out all the other members of the family.

"Somebody's bin in the spring-house," cried one of the girls, as she caught sight of the retreating figures. "Go for them, Dragon! Sic! sic! sic!"

But Dragon didn't need any exhortation. He was tearing down the hill past the spring-house with all the speed that was in him.

"Let's get as far away as we can!" cried Tim. "It's Jerry's gun that I'm thinkin' about. Run for it, an' the ould boy take the hindmost one!"

Away they went at a break-neck pace, with Dragon in hot pursuit. It was impossible to make speed in the long grass and yielding ground of the marsh, while the dog seemed to be but little embarrassed by the obstacles in his way. Presently a yell from Sam told that Dragon had

DRAGON PURSUING THE THIEVES.

come up with him, and that the race was ended. It was in vain that Sam dashed the several prints of butter on the animal's head; Dragon had no notion of letting go his hold.

"Tim! Tim!" cried Sam, "are you goin' to leave me, Tim?"

"Not a bit uv it," said Tim, as he set down his bucket with provoking deliberation on the rising ground at the farther end of the marsh. "Bring him here, Sam; that's no good place for a fight."

Dragon had scarcely time to take a second hold, before Tim was laying about him with his heavy cane. The dog at once let go of Sam, and gave his whole attention to Tim. The battle was fierce, and it was the utmost that Tim could do to keep the enraged animal off. He seemed to leap right at the throat of his assailant; but Tim was wary and very active, and his blows were terrific. As soon as Sam was released, he ran to the worm-fence near by, and, seizing one of the stakes, brought it to bear on Dragon's head with a force that soon brought the battle to a close. Limping from his wounds, the dog retreated, and the victors had the field to themselves.

"Are you much hurt, Sam?" asked Tim.

"Not very much," was the reply; "but he would 'a' took a good piece out o' my leg—bad

'cess to him—if it hadn't bin for the leather o' my boot."

Nor had Tim wholly escaped Dragon's teeth. He was bleeding from several wounds when he picked up his bucket and resumed the march.

"Here, you kids," said he, as they reached the hiding-place of the boys; "here's yer milk, an' a mighty big fight we had to get it for ye."

The bottle was first drained, however, of its remaining contents, Tim and Sam this time taking a liberal share. They felt tired, they said, after their recent exercise. It was rather a sorry-looking group that returned to Camerton after night set in. They were ashamed to go earlier. Tim and Sam both had their clothes badly torn in their battle with the dog, and the two younger boys were still too tipsy to walk erect. None of the party was in such high spirits as when they started up the mountain earlier in the day.

Chapter III.

THE NEW DRIVER.

THE miners employed in the Camerton Slope did not all begin work at the same hour in the morning. The engine started at six o'clock, setting the long wire rope in motion, and all the laborers employed by the day, both inside and outside of the mine, began work at that hour. It was needful, however, for some of the miners or coal-diggers to enter the mine at an earlier hour, so that there might be a sufficient number of cars loaded with coal by six o'clock for the engine, together with the horses and day-laborers, to begin work upon. The rest of the miners did not go into the mine till the engine started, and then they usually rode down the slope in the empty cars.

On the morning after the holiday, the number of men and boys waiting to ride in was larger than usual. They were sitting about in

groups here and there, smoking their pipes and chatting about the events of the day before. The all-absorbing topic of conversation was a serious affray that had occurred at Barney Dillon's saloon the night before. There were several versions of the affair and of the various parties mixed up in it; but all accounts agreed that Pat McCoy in his drunken spree had quarreled with a Welshman named Llewellyn. Words had led to blows, and the half-drunken friends of the two men, in their attempts to separate them, had become involved in the quarrel themselves, and a general fight followed, in which injuries more or less severe were inflicted upon several of the parties, including Pat McCoy. Neither Pat nor his son Tim was at the mine that morning.

"Where is George Atkins?" inquired the mining-boss, who had just arrived at the mine.

"Here he is," replied several of the men.

"George," said the boss, "I want you to let your boy, Archie, take Tim McCoy's horse today."

Tim was one of the drivers inside the mine, while Archie and his father worked together as regular miners digging coal.

"I don't know about that," replied the elder Atkins. "You know, Mr. Harris—for I've told you before—that I don't want Archie to drive."

"Let him go, George," said one of the men; "let him go."

"Certainly, let him go," chimed in a chorus of voices. The men who spoke were those who would be most affected by the loss of a driver that day. Under the pressure brought to bear upon him, Archie's father consented that he might drive Tim's horse just for that day.

"And why only just for to-day?" asked the boss.

"Because, Mr. Harris, I think it's best to keep Archie with me; and besides, if he takes Tim's horse, he'll get the ill-will of Tim and his father."

"Never mind about them," replied the boss; "Tim and his father both will get their walking-papers before night. I'm sick and tired of this spreeing and fooling. Go to the stable, Archie," he added, "and get Tim's horse."

The engine had started by this time, and the miners were climbing into the empty cars as they entered the mouth of the slope at intervals of a few yards apart. This was not Archie's first experience in driving. He had frequently filled vacancies before; and he now quickly followed after the other drivers, riding Tim's horse into the separate opening in the hillside—a few rods distant from the mouth of the slope—by which the horses were taken into the mine. It was always

interesting to visitors to watch the drivers duck their heads and lie down nearly flat on their horses' backs as they entered the mine, guided only by the light of the little lamp which hangs in the cap on the forehead of every worker under ground. Woe to the boy that raised his head up too high; he was sure to bump it against the timbers overhead. In the ride of a half-mile underground to the point where the drivers began work, there was only an occasional place here and there where one could rest himself for a few minutes at a time, by sitting upright on his horse. Of course he might walk and lead his horse over part of the route, if he chose to do so, but there were places where they must pass through water, varying from a few inches to a couple of feet in depth, so that the boys always rode their horses in and out.

At the bottom of the slope was a long stretch of level track called a "lye." It was the place to which the horses pulled the loaded cars from all parts of the inside workings to be sent up the slope and out of the mine, by means of the wire rope of which we have spoken. It was also the point from which the drivers started with their empty cars to convey them to the places where the miners were at work. The lye was lit up by several huge lamps, suspended from the roof or fastened to the side timbers. It was always

a lively place, somewhat resembling a railroad depot, where passengers are moving about and trains arriving and leaving.

When Archie reached the lye, the different sets of drivers were busy making up the trips of cars for the different "headings" or "entries," as the principal passages underground are called.

"Hello, Arch, is that you! Are you a-goin' to drive Tim's horse?"

The speaker was Mac Castle, who was one of the drivers in the same entry as Tim, and between whom and Tim, as we have already seen, no good feeling existed. Mac had mounted his horse and entered the mine before he knew who would be assigned to Tim's vacant place.

"Yes," replied Archie; "father didn't want me to, but Mr. Harris and the men insisted; and so I took hold to help out to-day."

"Good enough," said Mac. "I hear say," he continued, "that Tim and that promisin' son o' his'n will both have to walk the plank before night. I wish your father would let you take the place, Archie."

"I wouldn't mind it a bit," said Archie, "if Tim has to go. It would be easier for me than digging coal; but then you know what father thinks about it."

"Yes, I know," replied Mac, with a laugh, "and he's right every time. It don't do a fel-

low a bit o' good to be sandwiched in with a lot o' tough cases like us."

The turn-keeper or boss-driver of their entry came along at this moment to assign them to their places. It was his business to "keep the turn," as it was called; that is, to see that all the miners in his entry were served with an equal share of the empty cars. This was a matter requiring calculation, as the rooms in which the coal was dug were not all equally manned; some of the rooms having two or three men working in partnership, and others having only a man and a boy, or a man and two boys, etc.

"Archie," said the turn-keeper, "you fall in after Mac. Take three cars. Go to 29 right and left, and 28 to the right."

It may be remarked here that in a coal-mine, worked on the plan of the Camerton mine, the "rooms," or passages where the coal is dug, branch off from the principal passages called entries, or headings, somewhat in the same way that the rooms of a house lead off from the main hall-way. For convenience the rooms are numbered. So that if it is desired to find a certain miner underground, you would simply inquire what entry he worked in, and the number of his room. This would be like searching for a house by street and number in a city.

"Shall I be the last?" inquired Archie, after receiving his instructions.

"No," said the turn-keeper, "I 'm coming after you."

Away they went in regular procession, half a dozen of them, bound for the rooms of the south entry, a mile or more distant, each driver sitting on the front of his forward car, the only light for himself and horse being furnished by the little lamp that hung in the driver's cap. The horses had become so accustomed to the route that the drivers had little difficulty in keeping them in it. They seemed to know every turn and winding as well as their masters.

Archie was welcomed by the miners in every room where he went that day, and as the news got abroad that a new driver was to be appointed, quite a number of the men expressed their desire that Archie might be put in the vacant place. Though not so big a boy as Tim, he was quite as capable, the men said, and far more civil and obliging.

In his heart also Archie wished he might have the place, if it was settled that a change would be made. He was not younger than some of the other boys who were at work, with their fathers and other seniors, as regular miners, but he was of slighter build than many boys of his age. The heavy work of digging coal told upon

his health. His bones ached so, very frequently, when the day's work was done, that he found it impossible to enjoy his evenings, or to devote them to study, as he so much desired to do. And it must be added that his way was made harder than it needed to be, by his father's rather peculiar disposition.

Mr. Atkins was highly respected among the miners for his ability as a workman, and for the sterling qualities of honesty, industry, and general reliability. Few men in the mine could dig more coal in a day than George Atkins, and none knew better how to take care of his earnings. But he was a hard master for Archie. He did not mean to be unreasonable or harsh toward his boy, but he was both. He seemed to be strangely incapable of measuring fairly the amount of work that a boy of Archie's age and size ought to be able to do. This was the one great trouble of Archie's young life. He would have worked himself to death to please his father, or to gain some commendation from him; but his utmost efforts in general fell short of the requirement made of him. It was this fact that made Archie more than willing to quit coal-digging, and go to the easier work of driving.

The day passed off without any special incident underground. Mac and Archie were together as much as their several duties would

permit, and when they came to the lye with their last trip in the evening, they mounted their horses, and rode out of the mine in company.

"I guess you 'll be back again to-morrow, Arch," said Mac, as they parted at the stable after putting their horses away.

"I do n't know, Mac; I have n't very much hope," was the reply; "but I think it all depends on whether Mr. Harris pushes the thing. Father won't want to offend him."

When Archie reached home, an hour or more after his father, he found that the boss had already "pushed the thing," and it was settled that he was to have the vacant place. Mr. Atkins gave his consent very reluctantly, and only because he found himself in somewhat of a dilemma. Aside from the defect which we have already noticed, Mr. Atkins was a very worthy man. He was quite anxious to keep his boy away, as much as possible, from the evil associations to which he would be exposed as a driver. Then, too, as we have seen, he was fearful of incurring the ill-will of Tim and his father. But on the other hand, it was a matter of policy not to offend the mining-boss. It was to this feature of the case that Archie was indebted for his father's favorable decision.

That evening, after supper, Archie called at Mr. Harris's house, and asked to see him.

"Well, Archie," said the boss, "I suppose your father has told you that you are to have Tim's place."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, how will that suit you?"

"It will suit me first-rate," replied Archie. "I 'd like to drive for a year or two, till I get a little bigger and stronger. But I called to ask, Mr. Harris, if I can't have some other horse."

"What's the matter with Bill?" inquired the boss.

"There's nothing the matter with him," said Archie. "I don't ask for a better horse than Bill; but Tim thought so much of his horse, that it will make him very mad with me if he finds me driving Bill."

Mr. Harris laughed, and replied:

"Never mind what Tim says or does. But we have a new horse, that I was going to put in the west entry in a day or two. If it will suit you better I 'll put Bill there, and let you have the new horse. But, mind you, you 'll have lots of trouble teaching him the route, and he may have some bad tricks."

"I'll take the risk, sir," replied Archie.

"Very well," said Mr. Harris. "Tell the stable-boss to give you the new horse to-morrow."

Archie thanked him and bade him good-night.

Chapter IV.

JERRY COULEHAN.

WHEN Jerry Coulehan reached his home at a late hour on the night after the robbery of his spring-house, there was no one of his household astir to acquaint him with what had happened; and, in fact, he was hardly in a condition fully to comprehend it. He had gone to Camerton—a journey of about three miles by the winding mountain road—with a load of apples in the afternoon, and learning that it was an idle day with the miners, he had fallen in with his old associates at Barney Dillon's, and was only too willing to join in the general carousal.

It was only a few years since Jerry had turned from mining to farming, and though he was in the main industrious and successful in his new pursuit, he had lost none of his interest in his old companions; and his relish for such scenes

as were then taking place at Dillon's was in no wise abated.

Jerry was a man of striking appearance. He was tall but thin, broad-shouldered, loose-jointed, bending forward as he walked, and was much given to talking to himself aloud and clawing the air with his abnormally long arms, as if to emphasize his words, whether in conversation with himself or others. His face, long-drawn and blank-looking in repose, had a wonderful mobile power in his moments of excitement, and took on a thousand different expressions in correspondence with the incessant action of his hands and arms. In speech he was deliberate, and almost every sentence was punctuated with a peculiar guttural "ha! ha!" which scores of people had tried in vain exactly to imitate. Strangers generally shunned him as a crazy man; but those who knew him best had no such fear of him, and he was welcomed on this occasion as quite an accession to the party at Barney Dillon's.

It was a happy circumstance for Jerry that night that he could trust his faithful team to keep the road up the mountain-side. He himself could scarcely do more than sit in the straw in the bottom of his wagon, and engage himself in earnest conversation. His sleep was unusually prolonged the next morning, and he was in no very amiable mood to receive the intelligence that

JERRY COULEHAN RECOUNTING HIS LOSSES.

his premises had been invaded the day before, his milk and butter stolen, and his hitherto invincible dog, Dragon, beaten till he was a sight to behold, and utterly spiritless.

"The murtherin' scoundrels!" cried Jerry, waxing more and more wrathy as he took in the full extent of what had happened; "an' did ye stand an' see the dog bate to death before yer eyes an' do nothing to help hum? Was there none o' yez that could get the gun an' let the light uv day into their unholy carcasses? ha! ha!"

"We was afraid to do it," said one of the girls, "for fear of killing Dragon; and what could we do if the vagabonds had turned on us when you was n't at home?"

Jerry was very methodical in keeping his accounts; and after he had visited the spring-house and the scene of the battle, he began to figure up his loss.

"There's a dog," said he as he walked up and down the yard by the kitchen door, and swung his arms above his head, "the best dog in the Shtate, bate out uv all resimblance to the dog that he was. Fifty dollars would n't buy his like again; ha! ha! Thin there's me butter—splindid butter it was, too (there's none can bate the ould woman makin' butter)—an' I wud deliver it this blessed day to Squire Hogan an' Mrs. Gans; ivery pound uv it

worth a quarter uv a dollar. Then there's me milk—to think uv cows like Dolly an' Judy givin' milk to find its way down the throats of villyuns like them! I'll murther each an' ivery one uv them before another night comes on."

Jerry entered the living room, and took down his trusty gun. Then, upon second thought, he replaced it upon the hooks, and asking his wife and daughters for a full description of the marauders, he went to the village to lay his complaint before Squire Hogan.

"It will be necessary, Jerry, for you to find out who it was that committed the offense before I can issue a warrant, said the magistrate, after Jerry had made his statement.

"That's jist what I'm afther," said Jerry. "I could punish the miserable spalpeens meself if the law would find them for me. What would I be wanting wid the law if I knowed who it was?"

"Your best plan, Jerry," continued the magistrate, "will be to offer a reward for their discovery, and when we find out who they are, we can arrest and punish them."

Jerry at length consented to this, and with the assistance of a friend, several copies of a notice were posted up about the village, offering a reward of five dollars for information that would lead to the conviction of the guilty

parties. It was not the first time, by any means, that depredations had been committed on Jerry's premises by the young men and boys of the mining community, and he was now convinced that the time had come to make an example of some one.

After leaving the squire's office, Jerry learned of what had befallen his friend, Pat McCoy the night before, after he himself had started home with his team, and he stopped at McCoy's house to inquire about him. Pat was in bed, very much bandaged and plastered about the head and face, and so badly bruised in his back and shoulders that he could not turn himself in the bed. Tim and his mother were constantly employed in lifting him about in the endeavor to find some easy position to lie in. This was the reason why Tim was not at work. His father's condition was indeed quite serious; and when he was first brought home, the doctor was by no means certain that he would survive his injuries.

Several days later all Camerton was startled by the news that warrants had been issued for the arrest of Mac Castle and Archie Atkins, who were charged with trespass, and also with the theft of butter and milk from Jerry Coulehan's premises. Tim McCoy and Sam Smallwood were the witnesses who undertook to prove the charges.

This bold movement had become necessary, in their judgment, to divert suspicion from themselves. Jerry was making more fuss about the affair than they had any idea he would, judging from his forbearance in the past; and certain families, who lived near the path to the mountain, were already giving the names of the various parties who had made the ascent that day. Tim and his party were known to be of the number. Besides this, one of the younger boys had indiscreetly boasted of the big draughts of milk furnished them by the adventure of the two older boys.

Tim and Sam found it needful to admit that the party had indeed been regaled with Jerry Coulehan's milk, and to invent a story to the effect that they had simply seized the bucket which the guilty parties had abandoned, probably in order to escape detection. This story was drilled into the other boys, who, of course, of their own knowledge, could not, in any event, testify as to where the milk came from. They knew nothing but what the two leaders chose to tell them.

Beyond the desire to screen himself by making an accusation against Archie and Mac, Tim saw his opportunity to strike a revengeful blow at the boy who had taken his place as driver in the south entry. The discharge of his father and himself he felt to be a family disgrace, and

it seemed to him that the force of the blow would be somewhat broken if he could involve his successor and Mac also, both of whom he cordially disliked, in a criminal charge. When it became apparent to him that he must do this, or in all probability be accused himself, he sent for Sam, and the plot was concocted forthwith. The other boys were simply to testify to having seen Mac and Archie climb the Welshman's Pass, and that, later on, a bucket of milk had been brought to them by Tim and Sam, who told them that it had been taken by Mac Castle and Archie from Jerry Coulehan's spring-house, and then hidden away by them in their flight after the battle with the dog.

As soon as the matter was arranged, Sam went to Squire Hogan to give information of what they would prove as to the robbery, while the other boys were sent to Tim's house to be drilled for the approaching trial.

The astonishment of Mac and Archie may well be imagined when they learned that a constable had entered the mine on the afternoon of the third day of Archie's experience as a driver, and was waiting for them at the lye. At first they thought the whole matter was a practical joke put up on Archie because of his recent appointment as a driver. Boys entering on new positions were frequently put through rude cere-

monies of initiation. But when the truth dawned upon them they were dazed almost beyond the power of utterance, and gazed in blank bewilderment at each other, and at the gaping crowd that had collected about them at the lye. Mac was the first to recover the power of speech.

"This is Tim McCoy's doin's, gentlemen," said he; "blamed if it isn't."

Archie protested his innocence in the strongest terms; but of course all this was of no avail. The warrant directed them to appear for trial the following Saturday afternoon.

During his next trip Archie seized a few minutes to run into the room where his father worked to acquaint him with what had happened.

"You went up the mountain that day, didn't you, Archie?" said his father, as soon as he had recovered from his astonishment.

"Yes, sir; but I give you my word of honor that I didn't steal anything either from Jerry Coulehan or from anybody else."

"I believe you, my boy," said Mr. Atkins with a warmth of manner and a touch of tenderness that was quite unusual toward Archie. "I believe you," he repeated, bringing his fist down on his knee with sudden emphasis. "There 's going to be some false swearing, very likely," he added, "and perhaps it won't be

easy to get around it; but do n't be crying about it, lad. We 'll give the rascals a hard fight for it."

Archie went back to his work with a heart greatly lightened. This expression of confidence in him by his father was almost a full compensation for the slanderous accusations of others.

Chapter V.

THE TRIAL.

SQUIRE HOGAN'S court was held in one corner of the company's large warehouse, the department of justice being fenced off from the freight-room only by a low railing. On the following Saturday afternoon the big room was packed almost to suffocation with an eager, curious crowd, long before the hour set for the trial; the numerous piles of freight affording elevated and comfortable seats for those fortunate enough to be among the early comers. By mutual agreement, work in the mine was hurried all the morning, and during the noon hour up to two o'clock in the afternoon, without intermission. At that hour all Camerton quit work, and made preparation to be present at the trial, which was fixed for three o'clock.

Mr. Atkins had secured the services of a visiting lawyer, named Matlack, for Archie's

defense, and it was decided that the two boys should make common cause, and be tried together. Jerry Coulehan appeared as the prosecutor, and undertook to manage his own case. He had been a good deal engaged in reading law during the several days that had elapsed since he commenced the legal proceedings, and had consulted every man in the village who was supposed to have any acquaintance with legal forms, or the method of procedure in criminal cases. The remainder of his time was taken up in rehearsing himself for his part in the trial. It was a subject of remark among the knowing ones that Jerry seemed much more anxious to acquit himself well as a lawyer in the proceedings than to recover damages or to punish the offenders.

Exactly at three o'clock, Jerry appeared upon the scene, wearing his most important and knowing look, and dressed in the best suit of clothes he had ever exhibited in Camerton. After the usual opening formalities, Jerry arose to present the case for the prosecution, as follows:

"May it plaze yer honor, I'm intering this timple uv justice for the first time a-seekin' uv me rights; but it's not the first time, yer honor, that I've been dealt wid foul; ha! ha! I'm a honest man, yer honor. My car*ak*ter is under-

stood to yez all, gentlemen," continued Jerry, as he turned with a wave of his hand to the crowd. "If I do say it mesilf, it's a honest car*ak*ter. It's as honest a car*ak*ter as ony man in Camerton can show, be hum whosumever he is; ha! ha! Yer honor, I—I—"

At this point Jerry seemed to forget what came next. The crowd applauded and offered various suggestions, while the court sternly commanded silence. Jerry hitched up his sleeves with a kind of desperate energy till his arms were bare nearly to the elbows, and then remarked:

"It's me first attimpt at a speech, gentlemen, and I'm laborin' in defince uv me rights. But it's warrum work, an' I'm not used to it. Wud some one uv me many friends be kind enough to bring me a dthrink o' water."

It took some little time to work through the crowd with the water, and in the meantime Jerry rubbed his brow and the top of his bald head with his red bandanna handkerchief. Then he wiped his spectacles, and proceeded to examine his notes. He drank a liberal quantity of the water that was handed him, and then resumed his speech:

"As I was a sayin', yer honor an' gentlemen, I'm a honest man a-seekin' uv the pertection uv the law. Think uv me feelings, yer honor, when

I went to me home, which home it is me paradise, an' there I found that the serpint had entered it—the same ould serpint or some uv his descindents that was in the garden of Eden; ha! ha! Me dog, yer honor, the faithful companion uv me family and the pertector uv me home, was set upon an' almost murthered wid some sort of a bludgeon. No words uv mine, gentlemen, can tell how me poor dog must have suffered. The house at the foot uv the hill where me milk an' butter is kept, was intered in broad daylight, the milk uv me best cows was wasted in the insides uv base cutthroat villyuns, an' the butter that me wife made for other people was throwed all about the place like common dirt; ha! ha!

"The guilty blaggards that done all this is here, yer honor, right under yer very eyes, an' it's not the first time that they've bin guilty uv similar sich doins'. Now wid yer honor's permission, I'll bring on the witnesses what will prove the truth uv what I'm sayin'; ha! ha!"

The first witnesses were Jerry's wife and daughter, who testified as to what was stolen and the injuries inflicted on the dog, but they could not identify the guilty parties. Then in a loud voice, Jerry called out:

"Tim McCoy! Come forward, Tim, and give yer testimony to the court."

Tim worked his way forward, and, after being sworn to "tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth," was ready to begin. In putting the questions which drew from Tim his story, Jerry was prompted by a friend, whose legal acquirements were rather more extensive than his own.

Tim went on to say that he and a party of his friends had gone up the mountain for a jaunt on the idle day, occasioned by the breaking of the rope. While picking blackberries in the woods, they had been attracted by the barking of a dog, and the sound of screaming female voices. Hurrying to the rising ground at the edge of the wood which overlooked Jerry Coulehan's place, they saw Mac Castle and Archie Atkins running from the direction of the spring-house, the one with a bucket in his hand, and the other with something wrapped up in white cloths. They had not run far, however, before the dog came up with them. They then turned upon him, and with a heavy club and a fence-stake, soon beat him off. Observing from his elevated position that they abandoned the bucket soon after leaving Jerry Coulehan's premises, he and Sam Smallwood had secured it to see what it might contain, and finding it to be milk, had helped themselves to it, and then restored the bucket to its hiding-place.

Sam Smallwood confirmed Tim's story, with the additional circumstance that Archie's face was bleeding when the fight with the dog ended, and that the scar, made either with the teeth or the paw of the dog, was still plainly visible.

This part of the testimony produced quite a sensation in the court, and Archie was painfully aware that numerous eyes were fixed upon the still remaining traces of the wound that he had received from an unknown hand while climbing through the Welshman's Pass.

The testimony of the younger boys was unimportant, and tended only to confirm that of the two older ones at minor points.

Mr. Matlack's cross-examination of Tim and Sam was skillful and searching, but it failed to involve them in any contradiction, or essentially to break the force of their very damaging testimony. Witnesses to the previous good character of the two boys were numerous; but neither this testimony, nor Mr. Matlack's plea, could offset the positive statements of Tim and Sam, confirmed, as they seemed to be, by the several minor circumstances that had come to light.

It was seven o'clock, and the trial had lasted four hours, when Squire Hogan gave his sentence againt Mac and Archie, imposing a fine of ten dollars and costs upon each of them. He was sorry, he said, that duty required him to

pronounce such a sentence upon boys who had hitherto stood well in the community, but justice was no respecter of persons. He also admonished them to keep a strict guard over themselves in the future, that they might not again be involved in such wanton and criminal conduct.

Jerry Coulehan was the only party concerned in the trial whose satisfaction at the outcome was altogether unalloyed.

"I 've incountered one uv yer crack city lawyers," said he, "an' bate hum intirely out uv his boots. I left hum niver a peg to shtand on; ha! ha! Did ye iver see a purtier thrial nor that?"

Jerry celebrated his legal triumph by treating the crowd at Barney Dillon's that night. He drank with them, but not to the same extent as usual. His intoxication was of another sort. While the more boisterous of the crowd drank and guffawed to their hearts' content, Jerry drew a few select friends into a corner, and engaged them in earnest conversation as to the propriety of another change in his line of business.

"I could dig coal wi' ony o' ye, when I worked beside ye in the slope," said Jerry; "but sez I to meself, one day, sez I, 'Jerry Coulehan, yer a fool to be buryin' uv yerself up in the ground this way.' Then I took a shtep up in the world; an' wid me vegetables, an' me pigs,

an' me fruit and sich like, I 'm layin' away a little money. But it comes to me now like a angel had spoke to me: I must not waste me life a-tillin' of the soil. Gentlemen," continued Jerry, in his most dramatic manner, "it 's a lawyer that I must be."

One of Jerry's friends applauded this declaration vociferously. Another said: "It 's a second Daniel O'Connell that ye 'll be, Jerry, an' no mishtake," emphasizing his remark by taking another drink.

The other two members of this private circle winked at each other across the table, and laughed into their glasses. But all parties drank freely at Jerry's expense.

As for Tim and Sam, neither of them was exactly comfortable. It was the boldest piece of work that they had ever done. Whatever qualms of conscience Tim might have had, were dismissed with the remark: "When a doctor 's got to cut a feller's leg off, Sam, he do n't want to be foolin', an' wishin' it was back on again. Better fur them fellers to be a' paying ten dollars an' costs than fur you an' me. But is n't old Jerry a team? It was better than a circus, the way he carried on to-day."

Sam, however, was not so well satisfied with this view of the case. After the excitement of the trial was over, he found himself more

disturbed than he expected to be. After he went to bed that night he was kept from sleep by the recollection of his false oath. Heretofore he had sought only amusement in all his pranks, and had not deliberately plotted the serious injury of any one. Not until he was alone in the darkness of the night did the full consciousness dawn upon him that he had crossed the line which separates the fun-loving, mischief-making youth from the perjured villain. He would have given much to be able to undo the work of the past few days.

Chapter VI.

ANOTHER CHANGE IN THE SOUTH ENTRY.

WHEN Pat McCoy recovered from his injuries sufficiently to be able to do without Tim's attendance upon him, the latter secured the influence of several of the oldest miners in the south entry, and asked to be restored to his former position as driver. It is not at all probable that his suit would have been successful had it not been made at a most opportune moment. Joe Merryman, one of the drivers in the south entry, had been laid up for several days from the effects of an injury received in the mine. In coming out of the entry with his loaded trip he had allowed his cars to get too much headway on "the grade." This was a name applied to a part of the route where, for a couple of hundred yards or more, the course was down-hill, and it was needful for the driver to check the speed of the cars by drawing the

brakes. Too great speed on the grade made it dangerous for the horse in front of the cars, as well as for anything that might be in the way below; as, for instance, when one trip of cars got off the track, or broke down, it was important that the driver next behind should have sufficient control of his cars to stop at short notice, on being signaled by the waving of a light up and down in advance of him.

Joe Merryman was a good driver, and had met with as few accidents as any driver in the mine. His mishap, on this occasion, was due to starting down the grade at a more rapid rate than usual. Finding that the speed was increasing too much for safety, he began to draw the brakes tighter by running along at the side of the cars and forcing the levers down into the lower notches of the racks. He was nimble-footed, quick-sighted, and quite apt at this dangerous business, and had done the same thing successfully hundreds of times before; but on this occasion, a lump of coal that had fallen from one of the cars in advance of him, lay in the path. Over this he stumbled and was thrown between two of his cars. They did not run over him, but he was dragged a considerable distance and badly bruised. His place had been supplied by a substitute for a couple of days; but it became needful to make other arrangements, as

Joe's injuries proved to be more serious than was at first supposed.

Tim was not slow to take advantage of this accidental opening. He knew also that the mine was behind with its orders for coal, and that no driver could be spared from any other part of the mine to take the vacant place in the south entry.

Mr. Harris, the mining-boss, was a positive man, and not much given to changing his mind. He had flattered himself that he had gotten rid of the McCoys altogether, and that they would shortly remove to some one of the neighboring mines. But the severity of Pat's injuries, received in his drunken brawl, had drawn public sympathy toward him. The family would probably be in needy circumstances before Pat could earn anything for them again. It seemed therefore an act of charity to give Tim something to do. Besides this, Tim was more experienced and competent as a driver than any boy that could immediately be found to take Joe Merryman's place. So that Mr. Harris found himself almost compelled, by the force of circumstances, to restore Tim to his old position as a driver in the south entry.

Within a week, therefore, after the trial in which Archie had been convicted, upon Tim's false testimony, of a criminal offense, he found

himself associated in daily labor with the boy who had been the chief agent in putting this terrible stigma upon him. Archie had found his position cruel enough before, though he had seen nothing of Tim since the trial. There were a good many taunts to be endured, and many a joke was cracked at Archie's expense; but all this was nothing compared with the prospect of constant daily association with the author of the wicked plot.

Public opinion in Camerton was very much divided upon the question of Archie's guilt. While many of his friends had as much faith in him as ever, and openly and indiguantly asserted their belief that a plot had been concocted against the two boys, others were inclined to make light of the whole matter by saying that it was only a boyish prank anyhow; that there was no need of making so much fuss about it, and that Mac and Archie were just as likely to be into a thing of that kind as anybody else. Then there is a class of people—their name is legion—who find a low kind of gratification in seeing a good name clouded with suspicion or tarnished with positive guilt.

Archie's family belonged to the better class of the mining community. Mr. Atkins and his intimate friends held themselves aloof, for the most part, from the festivities that were a marked

feature of the social life of the Camerton people, and they were particularly disliked by most of the group who had their headquarters at Barney Dillon's. From these people, of course, Archie received no sympathy. Some of them were coarse and cruel in their allusions to what had taken place, and lost no opportunity to gibe him about his propensity for breaking into other people's premises, or his fondness for milk, etc.

Poor Archie! On the Saturday afternoon when the trial was over, and he found himself convicted of a criminal offense, it seemed to him that the world suddenly stood still, and that the sun would never shine again. Upon his formal release, after his father had paid the fine, he hurried out of the court-room, paying little attention to the various expressions of sympathy so freely tendered him. Indeed he scarcely stopped to notice any one till he reached home, where his mother was anxiously awaiting the result of the trial. Without a word he sank down on the floor beside her chair, put his face in her lap, and burst into tears. It was a long time since he had done this before, but it had been a very frequent practice with him all through his earlier years when anything especially troubled him. His mother cried with him, while she stroked his hair, and it was some time

before either of them spoke. Then Archie told her about the trial, and though she felt the sting very keenly, she comforted him as only a good mother *could* do, drawing largely upon her two favorite books, the Bible and John Bunyan.

Mr. Atkins did not reach home until after dark. None of his most intimate friends even, had ever seen him so agitated as he was over the result of the trial. Though he had partly suspected the method by which the charge against Archie was to be sustained, yet when the event confirmed his worst suspicions, he seemed to be unprepared for the blow. He was not, in general, a man of many words; but on this occasion his excited utterances in the presence of the crowd, that still lingered about the magistrate's office, led some of his friends to fear that he might be irritated into personal violence if they suffered him to carry out his purpose of following Tim and Sam to their homes. Upon one pretext and another they detained him with them till he was calmer, and then they persuaded him to let the matter drop for the present. He was very reluctant to do this, but at length consented to yield to their judgment, and went quietly to his home.

He talked very freely with his family about every feature of the situation, and his manifest pride in his boy, and unusual tenderness toward

him throughout the whole course of the proceedings, was, as we have seen, no small consolation to Archie.

The next day was Sunday. For the first time in years, Archie was absent from his Sunday-school, which met at nine o'clock in the morning. It seemed to him that he could not face the Sunday-school people while the incidents of his trial and conviction were still in everybody's mouth.

"After a while," he said to his mother, "I hope I 'll feel better about it; but I do n't feel as if I wanted to go out of doors to-day."

In the afternoon his Sunday-school teacher, Mr. Shryock, called to inquire about him. James Shryock was one of the miners in the Camerton Slope, and worked in the same entry as Archie. He was a sensible and pious man, and was held in high esteem among the miners generally. He had made a better use of his limited educational opportunities than most of the men, and his knowledge of the Bible was really wonderful. He carried a Bible into the mine as regularly as he did his dinner-bucket, and Room 57 in the south entry, where he worked with his partner, Thomas Tangey, was a sort of headquarters in religious matters for all that part of the mine. It was called "The School of the Prophets" by the other miners. Certain it was that the

two men who worked in Number 57 exercised a good influence over their fellow-miners, and in the occasional resting-spells that the men had underground, the Bible that was always to be found in 57 was frequently appealed to, to settle disputed points. It was a well-worn and very much-begrimed book, in consequence of being handled only by blackened fingers, but through its use a number of the miners had come to have a far better knowledge of the Word of God than they could otherwise have possessed.

Archie was greatly attached to his Sunday-school teacher, and, notwithstanding his expressed desire to avoid seeing any one that day, found himself more than willing to have a talk with him.

"I missed you from school, Archie," said Mr. Shryock; "and, though I think I understand the reason why you were not there, I thought I would come around and see about it."

"I 'm much obliged to you, Mr. Shryock, for coming," replied Archie, "but indeed, I did n't feel as if I could go to school this morning. It seemed to me that everybody would be saying: 'Here comes the thief.'"

"Not everbody, Archie," said Mr. Shryock, with a meaning smile; "not by any means. You 'll find very few people in Camerton who believe the story that was told against you yes-

terday; and probably the few who do believe it are not the ones that have the best standing. I'm not going to chide you, Archie, for being away to-day, under the circumstances; but I wish you could have gone over the lesson with us in the class, particularly if the boys talked about your case before your face as they did in your absence."

"What could my case have to do with the lesson?" Archie inquired in some surprise.

"You wouldn't ask that question, Archie, if you had studied the lesson for to-day. The boys are all a good deal put out at what was done against you yesterday, and seemed to think it wonderful that such a lesson should have come to us in the regular order just at this time."

Archie admitted that he had not looked at the lesson. He usually studied it during the week; but during the past week he had not once thought of his Sunday-school lesson. He got up at once to bring his Bible, and began to read aloud, by his teacher's request, from the thirty-seventh Psalm: "Fret not thyself because of evil-doers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity: for they shall soon be cut down like the grass, and wither as the green herb. . . . Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass. And he shall bring forth thy righteousness as

the light, and thy judgment as the noonday. Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass. Cease from anger, and forsake wrath: fret not thyself in anywise to do evil. For evil-doers shall be cut off; but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. . . . The wicked plotteth against the just, and gnasheth upon him with his teeth. The Lord shall laugh at him: for he seeth that his day is coming."

"Why does God let such things happen to innocent people?" asked Archie, after a pause.

"To try them," was Mr. Shryock's answer. "Perhaps one reason is," he continued, "to see how far wicked people will go in their wickedness when they have cast off the fear of God. But this is certainly true, that the cruel blows struck at us by wicked people show us how much or how little we 've got of the spirit of Him who meekly bore the insults and injuries heaped upon him, and in his dying agony prayed that his murderers might be forgiven."

"I'm afraid I have n't got much of that spirit," said Archie. "I do n't see how it 's possible to forgive mean and wicked people, that swear to lies about you when you 've done nothing against them."

"Archie, you remind me of a missionary story I've just been reading. An Indian chief shook his head when the missionary preached the duty of forgiving and loving one's enemies, and told the preacher that nobody could put it into practice. Then he was told instances of men who *had* put it into practice; and after puffing his pipe in deep thought for awhile, he said: 'If the Great Spirit who made man would give him a new heart it could be done, but not till then.' Archie," continued Mr. Shryock, "turn to Ezekiel xxxvi, 26, and read two verses."

Archie did so, and read: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."

The afternoon was pretty well gone when Mr. Shryock took his leave; but the world had visibly brightened all around Archie. The visit of his Sunday-school teacher had been like cordial to his wounded spirit.

Chapter VII.

THE NIGHT-SCHOOL.

CAMERTON settled down into its ordinary ways again, after the excitement of the trial had subsided. The references to it were less and less frequent, much to Archie's relief, as other and more immediate objects of interest claimed the attention of the people.

The rush of business, which the near approach of winter always brought to the mines, seemed to absorb everybody. Camerton mine, proud of its record for great achievements, was straining every nerve to keep abreast of the orders which impatient dealers were crowding upon it. The mining-boss seemed to be everywhere at once; or, at all events, he had the faculty of putting in an appearance upon the scene of every difficulty, and promptly remedying every slight accident which might cause detention. Each day's output of coal was marked

in large figures in the weigh-office window, so that the men might see it; and every successive day was an attempt to equal, or surpass, the record of the day before. Miners, drivers, horses, track-hands, dump-hands, and laborers of every description, all were stimulated to the utmost degree of energy; and a wearier set when night came to their relief it would be difficult to find.

Tired as Archie was in consequence of the extra work crowded upon him, it was nevertheless no small relief to find that all parties were becoming too much absorbed in the season's record for a great output of coal, to spend as much time as they had formerly done in discussing him and his unfortunate situation. But there were not wanting penetrating eyes, which detected that the matter was much in his thoughts, and that a change had come over his spirit. The words of kindly sympathy now and then spoken to him were gratefully appreciated.

At length, however, the season's rush was over. Winter had come in good earnest. The deepest snow that had been known for years concealed from view all those traces of coal-dirt and dinginess which usually distinguish a mining village. The most unsightly objects seemed wonderfully transformed by the thick mantle of pure white which enveloped them, while the

mountains that loomed up on either side of the village took on additional grandeur.

It was impossible to keep navigation open any longer on the river, which conveyed away the coal that Camerton mine had been sending out in a constant stream. The snow was drifting. Eight, ten, twelve, and even twenty feet of snow was reported in some of the cuts of the railroad, which the village depended on for its communication with the outside world. Work was therefore suspended, and the overtaxed men and boys and horses had a breathing-spell. It came none to soon for the aching bones and exhausted frames of many of them, and was greatly enjoyed by all.

"Archie," said Mac Castle one day, shortly after the mine shut down; "now's the time for that night-school you was talkin' about the day we was up on the mountain. They tell me that the teacher that was over at Hawksville, come to Mrs. Grant's boardin'-house to-day, and wants to get up a school here this winter."

"Is that so?" replied Archie. "Then, I guess we 'd better go and see him; but it seems to me, Mac, that what 's happened to you and me since then has rather knocked the notion out of my head. As we used to say when we went to day-school, 'I do n't care whether school keeps or not.'"

"Pshaw!" replied Mac. "That's the very thing that's put it into *my* head. I don't mean to stay with such fellows as we've got around here forever; and if there's any such thing as gettin' learnin' enough to make my way in the world outside o' the mines, I'm a-goin' to get it. But anyhow, Archie, I don't see the need o' givin' up to this thing. It was awfully rough on you an' me, an' it's right hard to bear; but we'll get even with Tim McCoy yet—see if we don't."

"If we only knew how much idle time we'd have this winter," said Archie, "we might go to day-school some more yet."

"But we don't know," replied Mac. "After this freeze is over and the snow gets away, they may go on again like they do some other winters, and keep us at work more than half the time. The only way to make a sure thing of it is to take the night-school for it."

"Agreed," said Archie. "Let's go and see the teacher."

Mr. Pancoast, the teacher, was out when they reached the boarding-house; but as it was just noon, and he would soon be in to dinner, they waited for him. In about half an hour, he made his appearance and gave them a cordial welcome. He had been furnished with a few names of parties who might probably be interested in a

night-school, and had been in search of some of them. Mac and Archie found their names among the number. By their aid, the list of probable scholars was greatly extended; and they agreed to join the teacher in a canvass of the village. Written notices were posted all over Camerton, fixing the commencement of the school for the evening of the next day.

The room engaged for the school was the basement of an old stone church, well up on the hillside. The building was no longer used as a church, having been found difficult of access, especially in winter, when the hillside was frequently one glare of ice from top to bottom. A new edifice more eligibly located had taken its place; and the up-stairs of the old building had become a kind of public hall, while the basement was occasionally occupied as a private school.

This was the first attempt at a night-school ever made in Camerton, and the idea seemed to be very popular. The room was well filled the first evening with a company which represented both sexes and almost all ages. Among the older candidates for education was Jerry Coulehan. Full of the idea of becoming a lawyer, he had been poring over law-books borrowed of Squire Hogan, ever since "the cilebrated trial," as he usually termed it. He had progressed so

far as to arrive at the belief that he must abandon his whole scheme unless he could in some way mend his education. On hearing of the proposed night-school, his enthusiasm knew no bounds.

"It 's jist the very thing!" said Jerry, throwing his arms aloft to give the proper emphasis to his words. "It 's a spicial intervintion of Providence to give men like mesilf a chance whin they 've been denied dacint opportunities in their youth."

Tim McCoy, Sam Smallwood, and others of the boys that have been mentioned in this story, were on hand also. That all the pupils had not come with a view to improve their education, or, at least, that this was not their principal object, began to be evident before the school had progressed very far.

The first evening was taken up with the brief examinations necessary to arrange such a promiscuous crowd into classes; and then the work of the school began in good earnest. Mr. Pancoast, the teacher, was capable and thorough, and succeeded in infusing his own spirit into the larger number of his pupils; and, be it said to their credit, that, though many of them were unprepossessing in appearance and uncouth in manner, he found in quite a number a genuine hunger for knowledge.

Jerry Coulehan was not seen at Barney Dillon's for more than two weeks; and when at last he put in an appearance there on Saturday night, the only night in the week that there was no school, he was rallied not a little on his new departure.

"Got yer fill uv high larnin' yet?" asked one of his old cronies, in a bantering tone.

"Not by a jugful," responded Jerry. "Shure an' it 's only shallow vessels that gits theirselves filled wid the first sup; ha! ha!"

"Some wan was tellin' me, Jerry," said another, "that ye was at the head o' yer class, an' wud bate the teacher himsilf afore long."

The first of these statements was true. Jerry was at the head of the men's class in nearly all the branches which they studied together. Despite his oddities of speech and manner, which made him a general laughing-stock, Jerry possessed no small share of mental force; and his application to his books was persistent and close. He brought his own opinions to school with him, however, and was not always as teachable as the model pupil is supposed to be; indeed, his grotesque manner during a recitation, and quaint remarks upon the subject of the lesson, frequently threw the whole school into an uproar of merriment, which rendered discipline exceedingly difficult. But none of the

pupils brought more of downright earnestness to bear upon his studies, or made more substantial progress, than Jerry Coulehan.

Archie at first was disconcerted by the unexpected appearance of the several parties who had done him so much injury. By degrees, however, he managed to ignore their presence, and become absorbed in his studies. He was apt at learning, and found little difficulty in leading his class.

Before the school was a month old some of its members began to prove themselves quite unruly. As the novelty of the situation wore away, their ardor in the pursuit of knowledge abated. To borrow Jerry Coulehan's figure, they were shallow vessels, filled with their first sup of learning. It seemed to irritate them that others were diligent in study, and were making a serious business of the opportunity which the night-school presented. Mr. Pancoast bore the annoyance quietly for awhile, in the hope that the troublesome parties would soon weary of the school, and cease their attendance. His experience elsewhere justified the belief that this would be the case at Camerton. But in this expectation he was disappointed. He found, at last, that he had on his hands a set of young fellows who would neither study themselves nor let the rest study; nor

would they, despite his pointed remarks on several evenings at the opening of the school, discontinue their attendance when they had no longer any desire to learn. The ordinary arts of annoyance—such as throwing paper wads, tobacco quids, etc., across the room at the more studious pupils; loud coughing; scraping the floor with their feet; and making other unnecessary noises—soon became too tame for these turbulent spirits, and they began to invent other methods of interruption.

One night Jerry Coulehan brought to school with him an old arm-chair, as he found the school benches hard and uncomfortable. It was a low-back, split-bottom chair, of a pattern much in vogue in the mining region, with the thinnest apology of a rag-cushion covering the seat. The next night, after school had commenced, Tim McCoy came marching in, carrying a chair of the same identical pattern, and cushioned in the same way as Jerry Coulehan's. Tim set his chair down close beside Jerry's, with the remark:

"Us old men has got to make ourselves as comfortable as we can; eh, Jerry?"

With the utmost assurance, Tim then seated himself in his chair, and, opening his book, pretended to be very much absorbed in study.

"Shure an' it 's a pity, ye young vagabond,"

said Jerry, in an angry tone, "that ye have n't got somebody to whale ye into a dacent respect for them as is oulder than yer own daddy."

A titter, all over the room, greeted this episode. The teacher at once commanded silence, and ordered Tim to remove his chair to his own side of the room. Mr. Pancoast had already resolved not to endure the increasing annoyances any longer, and was now only debating as to how many of his pupils deserved to be included in the edict of expulsion.

After this, however, for the rest of the evening, and for several evenings following, all went well. An unaccountable change seemed to have come over the spirit of the disturbers. They applied themselves to their books as they had not done before. The teacher began to hope that they were at length shamed out of their evil ways, and had begun to appreciate the advantages which they had hitherto seemed to despise. The other pupils wondered at the unusual quietness and good behavior of the unruly ones; and indeed, for a little while, Mr. Pancoast could justly pride himself that his school was becoming scarcely less than a model.

But, alas! the teacher had congratulated himself too early. The better era was soon rudely interrupted. It proved to be but the deceitful lull before the bursting of the storm.

Chapter VIII.

DISTURBANCE BEGINS.

JERRY COULEHAN had been to the blackboard to "do a sum" in the presence of his class. It was his especial delight to be selected for such a duty. He usually made it the occasion for a grand display, not only of his skill in figures, but also of his oratorical and dramatic abilities. With a piece of chalk about the size of his fist, he had covered a large part of the board with a line of great, scrawling figures, and, with an exuberance of language and gesture peculiarly his own, he proceeded to expound the mysteries of "long division." No demonstrator in any branch of science ever exhibited a keener enthusiasm or a loftier sense of self-importance than Jerry on this occasion.

"It 's *twenty-four* into *fifty-two thousand five hundred and seventy*," he remarked, as he finished putting the example on the board.

JERRY COULEHAN AT THE BLACKBOARD.

"Mr. Coulehan," said the teacher, "your figures are too large; you will not have room to carry the example out."

"I 'm makin' thim large so they will all be able to see them," said Jerry; "and onyhow, Mr. Pancoast, a baby blackboard like this is n't fit for a man to work on."

By the teacher's request, however, Jerry rubbed out his work, and reduced his figures to a fraction of their former size.

"*Twenty-four* into *five* won't go at all," said Jerry. "Do ony o' ye say that it *will?*" he inquired, as he turned to the class, swinging the chalk above his head. "Therefore, gintlemen," he continued, "it must be *twenty-four* into *fifty-two*. Do yez see that? Now, how mony times will that go?"

"Wunst," said one of the men.

"Wunst did ye say, me honey? Faith," continued Jerry, in his most triumphant manner, "ye must ha' been foreordained for a perfessor uv mathematics. It goes *twice*, gintlemen; *twice*, I say, and something over. We 'll now perceed to ascertain how much there 's over."

"Mr. Coulehan," said the teacher, "you are wasting too much time. Please do the work with as little talking as possible."

"Wasting time is it, Misthur Pancoast? Sorry to differ wi' ye, sir; but surely, sir, time

can not be said to be wasted when it 's spint in the illustration uv great principles."

It availed very little, however, to expostulate with Jerry, or to attempt to hurry him out of his usual pace. His expositions had, in general, the merit of clearness; and the time which they consumed was not wholly spent in vain.

But Jerry's appearance at the board furnished the occasion for a "regular circus" to the rest of the school. Mr. Pancoast's keen sense of humor led him to relax discipline at such times, and to wink at a kind of disorder not usually tolerated.

Jerry returned to his chair, after the exercise at the board was over, wiping his face with his old red bandanna handkerchief, and feeling quite satisfied with his performance. Scarcely had he sunk into his seat, however, with the heavy lunge of an old man, when suddenly he gave utterance to a startling yell like that of a wild Indian, and, leaping to his feet, slapped his hands behind him like one possessed, while a sudden burst of laughter in one corner of the room broke the momentary stillness which Jerry's strange antics had produced.

Jerry turned quickly around, tore the cushion from the seat of his chair, and, holding the latter up to the light, discovered a sharp-pointed, steel wire protruding through the bottom. At the

same moment, he found out, also, that the chair was not his own, though it was in the place which his chair had occupied ever since he first brought it to school.

Irritated no less by the laughter, which came all from one direction, than by the trick that had been played upon him, he concluded at once that the parties who found such keen enjoyment in the affair were the guilty authors of it; and before any one could divine his purpose, he had sprung across the room, with the chair in his hand, and brought it down with tremendous force on Tim McCoy's head. It was well for Tim that he was able partially to dodge the blow.

"Take yer chair, ye miserable whelp!" cried the furious old man, and he was about to strike again; but by this time, he was surrounded by the teacher and half a dozen of the men, who wrenched the chair away from him, while all the rest of the school looked on in utter bewilderment.

"Did iver ye see the like?" panted Jerry, as he found himself forced down upon one of the benches. "If it was n't the son uv me ould friend, Pat McCoy, I 'd bate him till he wud n't know whin he was hinder part before."

"What right have yer got to blame it on me?" asked Tim, with a cool defiance in his

tone that was in strange contrast with Jerry's excited manner. "Yer ain't much uv a lawyer, Mr. Coulehan, if yer don't know that ye've made yerself liable by what ye've done to me to-night."

The excitement of the pupils was all the greater because up to this moment scarcely any of them knew the reason of Jerry's fierce assault upon Tim. An examination of the chair, however, soon explained the whole matter.

"I'll bet it's some more of Tim McCoy's devilment," whispered Mac Castle to Archie, as the two stood looking on in utter astonishment. "But he's tackled the wrong coon this time; and he's goin' to get left."

It was certainly Tim McCoy's chair into which Jerry had thrown himself after he had finished his work at the blackboard. But how had the chair been substituted for Jerry's? and when was it done?

The general opinion seemed to be that the change was made in the period of disorder which occurred while Jerry was entertaining all parties at the blackboard. But though it was certain that quite a number of the pupils had left their seats and gathered about the class that was at the blackboard, no one had seen the one chair substituted for the other. Tim was able to prove, however, that he had not occupied his chair for

several evenings. He had got tired of it, he said, and it had remained unoccupied, in another part of the room—the very place where Jerry's chair now was. But notwithstanding this, the disposition to connect him with the affair was very general, and the feeling against him was very decided. The only explanation which he offered was as follows:

"I fixes my chair to suit myself. It 's to keep the cushion from slippin' off. If fellows sits down in my chair and do n't like it, let 'em keep out uv it. If them sentiments is wrong, gentlemen, I 'm sorry; but I can't help it."

Tim's air of injured innocence and downright bravado would have been convincing had he not already been detected in so many petty schemes of annoyance, and in this case all the circumstances were against him. All through the school he had taken especial delight in teasing Jerry; and, even before this last exploit, he had forfeited the old man's good opinion and aroused his resentment.

After the excitement had subsided in a measure, Mr. Pancoast asked all the pupils to take their seats and give him their attention for a few minutes. He had been greatly pleased, he said, with the good conduct of most of his pupils, and also with the progress they were making in their studies. It was very evident, how-

ever, that there were those among them who had no desire to learn, and whose further continuance in the school would be an annoyance and a hindrance to those who were studious. The time had now come to employ the winnowing process which he had found needful elsewhere. He made no reference to what had occurred that evening, but announced that Tim McCoy, Sam Smallwood, and two others, were expelled from the school for neglect of their studies and disorderly conduct in general.

After this episode the school began to get on finely. The chief disturbers gone, and others who had been under their influence awed into good behavior and something like diligence in study, Mr. Pancoast's school became increasingly popular. Other pupils came in to take the places of those who had been dismissed, until all the available space was taken up, and it became needful to refuse admission to any others.

But "troubles never come single-handed." Scarcely had the school finished congratulating itself on its riddance of the chief disturbers when a new interruption occurred. The boy who acted as janitor, in making the fire one evening, found that the stove would not "draw." After several ineffectual attempts to kindle the fire, he gave up in despair. The room was filled with a blinding, suffocating smoke at the time

for opening the school. It was impossible to go on with the regular exercises, and teacher and pupils resolved themselves into a "Committee of the Whole" to locate and remedy the difficulty with the fire.

The windows were opened on all sides to get rid of the smoke. The stovepipe was taken down, and thoroughly examined; the chimney-flue also was explored as far as was possible, but nothing was found out which served to explain the mystery. The fire was kindled afresh, and again the dense smoke poured out into the room, and presently drove all the inmates as before, coughing and wiping their eyes, out into the open air for relief.

"The divil himself must be in that chimbly," remarked Pete Donahue, one of the men pupils.

"Yis, or, more likely, wan uv his imps," suggested Jerry Coulehan.

The old building was by this time surrounded by a lot of the pupils, watching to see if any smoke came out of the top of the chimney.

"Not a bit," said a chorus of voices.

"There is some stoppage in that flue, surely," said Mr. Pancoast; "we shall have to give it up for this evening, and to-morrow we will have the flue examined by daylight, and find out what the trouble is."

Chapter IX.

SEARCHING FOR THE ENEMY.

AFTER most of the pupils had wearied of loitering about the building, and had started home, Archie Atkins, who seemed to have his eyes fixed upon one certain point, remarked:

"Boys, did any of you see a face at that window just now?" pointing to one of the upper-story windows.

"No," was the response of several.

"I 'm almost certain *I* did," said Archie.

"Is that so?" replied Silas Coleman, a short, thickset young man, who stood near Archie. "Say, fellows," he continued, turning to several others who were just leaving, "do n't go away. Mebbe there 'll be some fun yet. Archie Atkins thinks he saw somebody in yon window just now."

"I do n't believe a bit of it, and I ain't a

goin' to stay here and freeze, any longer," said Tom Scott.

"Right you are," chimed in Bill Stubbins. "Archie's got a chunk o' that blamed smoke in his eye; that 's all 's the matter with him. Go home, Archie, and wash it out," he added, as with several others he started off at a brisk pace.

"Yes," said Archie, "I 'll be with you presently, when I find out who 's up-stairs. I 'm sorry, boys, that you 're afraid to go up there with us."

A shout of derision was the only answer to this bit of banter; and then Mac Castle came near to the center of the remaining group, asking:

"Archie, who did you see in that window?"

"Unless I 'm worse mistaken than I ever was in my life before," said Archie, "I saw Sam Smallwood."

"Just as like as not," remarked Silas Coleman. "Boys," he continued, "it won't take us long to settle the matter. Let 's stay here and see what's what."

"Agreed," said all the rest.

There were just seven of the pupils still remaining, and Silas Coleman was the oldest of the group. He was well-fitted to lead such an enterprise. Strongly built, and active, decidedly fond of a bit of adventure now and then,

and almost a stranger to fear, the others were quite willing to follow his suggestions.

"We have n't got any key," said Silas, "and we can't get it, for it 's locked up in the company's office; but I guess we can soon find a ladder that 'll reach to one o' the windows. The rest o' you fellows stay here on guard," he added, "and Mac and I 'll go to Chris Marks's house, and see if we can get a ladder."

Chris Marks was one of the mine carpenters, and had charge of the shop in which the ladders were kept. It was a good while before Silas and Mac returned. Marks was not at home, and when at last they found him in a grocery-store, he had to send to his house for the key of the shop. But Silas made good use of the delay to secure the loan of a dark-lantern from the mine watchman.

Meantime the rest of the boys surrounded the old church so that they might watch it on all sides; and to keep themselves warm they marched in regular procession, at a lively gait, round and round the building, all the while keeping up a constant lookout.

When, at length, Silas and Mac returned, carrying the ladder upon their shoulders, all parties were pretty well warmed up with their exercise, and were in good spirits to begin their search of the upper story.

The building was an odd, unsightly pile, cruciform in shape, and built of stones, which were, for the most part, unhewn and rough-looking. On the inside, the various uses to which the room had been put in recent years had multiplied the crannies and corners and possible hiding-places. There were but few of the original pews remaining in place, but seats had been extemporized with boards and piles of lumber. Big store-boxes, that had done service in various bazaars and fairs, were piled up one on top of the other in the rear of the room. It was a ghostly-looking old place, unusually large for a village church; and rumor had it that it was haunted.

The ladder was quickly put in place on the rising ground at the rear window, on the side toward the village. The three youngest boys were instructed to continue their march around the building, while the other four were making the search. Silas Coleman went up first, carrying the dark-lantern in his hand, with Mac Castle following close at his heels.

"Two of us is enough on this ladder at once," said Silas. "Archie, you and Bill Nash stay down till we get in."

At first it seemed impossible to get the window open. The lower sash was prevented from rising by a nail in a gimlet-hole bored

into the window-casing, evidently for that very purpose. This obstacle Silas found out by uncovering the bull's-eye of his lantern, and looking through the window.

"Might as well be hung fur a sheep as a lamb," said Silas. "I 'm agoin' to bust the window and get that nail out. Keep yer face down, Mac, so the glass do n't cut ye."

So saying, Silas tapped on the glass with the end of his heavy pocket-knife, and quickly had a hole big enough to put his hand inside and remove the loose nail. Then, raising the sash, and holding it up with his head, he again uncovered the bull's-eye of his lantern and peered into the building, turning the light around.

"All 's quiet on the Potomac," he remarked; and in another minute, both Mac and Silas had crawled inside of the building. Archie and Bill Nash now ascended the ladder, and all four were ready to begin the search.

"Say, you fellows!" cried Silas, in a loud tone of voice. "If ye' re in here, ye might jest as well show yerselves as not, fur we 're goin' to hunt till we find ye."

A slight echo in the other part of the room was the only answer to this challenge.

"Save your breath, Silas," said Archie. "They 're not going to show themselves, you may be sure."

The search was then begun in good earnest. The light was flashed under every pew, behind every pile of lumber, and into every store-box.

"What does this mean?" said Archie, suddenly, as he stood by the door.

Silas turned the light in that direction, and saw—as did all the others—the key standing in the lock.

"That door's been locked from the inside," said Mac Castle.

"Not a bit o' doubt about that," replied Silas, his eyes fairly dancing with delight at the discovery. "Them coons are in here, sure's a gun; and they came in through the door."

The search was now resumed with the utmost confidence of success; but it soon became evident that the parties they sought were not to be found in the main audience-room. Then the little room back of the pulpit, the end gallery, the stairways leading up to it, the closets under the stairs, the vestibule—all were thoroughly explored under the searching light poured forth in a steady stream from the bull's-eye of the lantern; but no human being was found in lurking anywhere.

"There's only one other place," said Silas.

"The spire!" chimed in the rest in a chorus.

"Yes," answered Silas, in a sort of medita-

tive mood, "the spire; and it's a mighty ticklish place to go up. If the rascals are up there, they've got the bulge on us; they can crack our heads, and not half try."

"I guess we'd better keep out o' that spire," said Bill Nash. "This is the only head I've got; and I believe the scalawags is up there, and they're loaded fur us; that's why they're keepin' so quiet. I would n't risk it."

There was cold truth in these suggestions, and the effect was rather depressing to the enthusiasm of the explorers.

"What shall we do?" said Mac.

"I know what *I'm* goin' to do," answered Silas; "I'm goin' up in that spire. I 'm goin' far enough up to find out if anybody's up there; but I don't want any o' you fellows to go."

"Silas," said Archie, in an earnest tone, "I think you'd better not go up; it's too dangerous. The chaps that are up there left their mark on Mac and me once before, in a place where we could n't help ourselves, and before they'll be caught now, they'll break the head of every fellow in the crowd."

"They sha'n't break you fellows' heads," replied Silas, "for I ain't a goin' to let you go up. This is *my* job, and I'm goin' through with it, if it's the last thing I ever do. All I want to know is whether they're in that spire or not."

Seeing that it was useless to attempt to dissuade Silas from his purpose of going up into the spire alone, the others could do no more than merely agree to stand by, and be ready to give him any assistance that might become necessary. The outside guard were first hailed through the window, and told what was now to take place, and then the party started for the end gallery, from the back part of which a door opened into the dismal hole that led up into the spire.

The door, being fastened only by a button, was easily opened, and then Silas, raising the light above his head, endeavored to explore the spire on all sides as far up as possible. This done, he cried out in a loud voice:

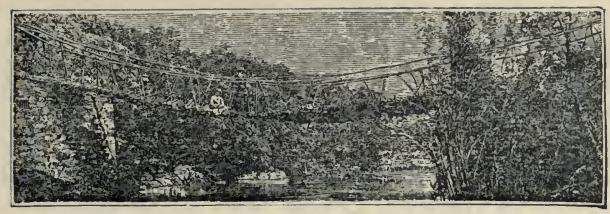
"Sam Smallwood, come down out o' that spire. We know that ye're up there, an' 'taint a bit o' use fur to try to hide yerselves. Come down, boys," he repeated after a pause, "and save us the trouble o' hunting ye."

The tones of Silas's voice had a strange and hollow sound, as they reverberated in the heights above his head, and when at length they died away into silence, it became evident that his second attempt to communicate with the parties supposed to be within hearing distance, was no more of a success than the first had been.

Silas now began his preparation for the

ascent, by taking off his coat. He was dressed after the style preferred by very many of the miners. The evening dress was, in fact, a counterpart of the regular mining suit, but, of course, cleaner and better fitting—a heavy blue shirt, and pantaloons fastened about the waist by a leather belt, instead of suspenders. He unbuckled his belt, and thrust it through the handle of his lantern, thus fastening the lantern to his waist, and leaving the bull's-eye uncovered, to illuminate the way before him. By this means both his hands were left free to assist his ascent, and to defend himself if it should become necessary.

SILAS ASCENDING THE TOWER.



Chapter X.

CAUGHT IN THEIR OWN TRAP.

THERE were no stairs leading up into the spire; but for some distance the ascent was made comparatively easy by a succession of braces and cross-beams running in all directions, and only a few feet apart. Standing on one of these, Silas could easily reach to the one next above it, and pull himself successively from one to the other.

After two or three "lifts" of this sort, he would stop for rest, and turning his light upward, endeavor to explore the space above him. He might be said to be on familiar ground, as it was not the first time that he had climbed to the top of the spire; but as his several trips had been made in daylight heretofore, and without any fear of an enemy lurking above him, his progress on this occasion was necessarily slower, and much more difficult than ever before.

His policy was to keep well in the center of the spire, where the beams, crossing and re-crossing each other above him, afforded greater protection.

More than half of the upward journey had in this way been accomplished, and Silas was beginning to question whether the spire really contained any one besides himself, when, all at once, just as he took hold of the brace next above him for another "lift," with every sense on the alert, his ear caught a sound in the space above him, as of something thrown or falling, and he dodged quickly under the partial protection of the friendly piece of scantling. But despite this precaution, he was struck on the side by a brickbat, flung with great violence from the height above, and with an aim that would not have missed his head, had he not dodged under the beam. As it was, the missile merely glanced along his side, but with such a force that for a moment he turned faint, and was fearful that he should lose his senses. Yet, notwithstanding his injury, he promptly answered with a yell of derision, and at the same instant closed the slide of his lantern.

"No, ye did n't. Bah!" shouted Silas. "Try again, gentlemen!"

Never was a groan more heroically suppressed, or more completely disguised. But

for his derisive outburst he must have groaned aloud under the pain of his hurt. He had presence of mind enough also quickly to change his position, so as to spoil the aim of his assailants. And it was well that he did so, for missiles of various sorts quickly followed the first—bricks, stones, short pieces of scantling, etc.

"The heavier the shower, the sooner it'll be over," thought Silas, as he stood bracing himself against the side of the spire, with his arms raised to protect his face and head. Twice more he was hit by random shots in the darkness, but with nothing like as serious effect as the first. At the moment when the general assault began, the space above was filled with deep, sepulchral groanings, and other hideous and unearthly sounds, till it seemed as if the lost spirits of the bottomless pit had taken up their abode in the spire, and were resenting his invasion of their own peculiar precincts.

"They're afraid they have n't hit me, and now they're tryin' to scare me to death," said Silas to himself, his spirits beginning to rise as his spasm of pain passed off.

As soon as the shower of missiles was spent, Silas began quietly to work his way downward in the darkness. He paid no attention at first to the anxious inquiries of his comrades below; but when he was sufficiently near the bottom to

make it impossible for any one above to take aim at him again, he boldly uncovered his lantern, and answered:

"All right, boys! They 're up there! We 've got them treed, sure!"

This announcement was greeted with a joyful shout. It was a great relief to the boys to find that Silas was still alive, and not even disabled. When the storm of missiles, accompanied with such horrid noises, began, they stood just outside the door at the bottom, every moment expecting to hear Silas's dead body come tumbling down. When, therefore, they ascertained that the parties they sought were really in the spire, and that Silas was coming down in safety, their glee at the double discovery may readily be imagined. No hunter was ever more elated over the game which his rifle had brought down, no professional detective ever felt prouder of his most brilliant piece of work, than did that group of boys at the outcome of their adventure. They danced and shouted for joy.

"There 's *somebody* up there," said Silas, as he touched bottom again; "and several of him, I should say. The scalawags came very nigh makin' a finish o' me, though, and I 'm mighty glad I did n't let any o' the rest o' you go up. If it had n't been for them cross-beams,

my cocoanut would 'a' been cracked in more places than one."

"I wish we knew who it is that's up there," said Bill Nash.

"We 'll stay here till we find out," rejoined Silas.

"That's about the size of it," put in Mac.

"See here, boys," continued Silas; "it's gettin' late, and our people won't know what's become of us. I 'm tired, and the mark o' respect that them fellows up there gave me just now makes me a little lame. S'pose a couple o' you fellows go to our houses, and tell all our folks what we 're about, and bring us something to eat. We' ll have to make a night o' it, I guess, unless them fellows see fit to come down."

The outside guard had already been informed of the result of the excursion into the spire. They had plainly heard the noises, and knew pretty well how to interpret them. At the call of Silas they now ascended the ladder, and entered the building for a resting spell, as Mac Castle volunteered to stand on guard awhile alone.

"But there's no need to watch anything, now, but the spire," he said, "and not much need to watch that."

"There's the windows up there for them to get out of," remarked Archie.

"Yes," answered Mac; "but unless the old boy helps 'em, they'll never be able to climb down that smooth spire."

Mac commenced his march in a sort of semi-circle to and fro in front of the church, keeping his eyes fixed on the spire windows; while Archie and Bill Nash went to the homes of all the party to explain the situation, and bring back something for a midnight supper.

In the meantime, Silas and his companions set about making a fire in one of the two stoves which the old church contained, breaking up bits of board, old boxes, and anything else they could find. In a few minutes they had a roaring blaze in the stove, and they gathered about it in high spirits. While they were resting themselves, and cracking their jokes at the expense of their prisoners in the "spire-trap," as Silas called it, the night-watchman, who had loaned them his lantern, came along to learn how the search was progressing. He had intended to be there sooner, he said, but his duties elsewhere had detained him. As the building was "Company property," it was under his care at night; and he had authorized the search that had been so successful. When he learned of the discovery that had been made, he was in as great glee as the rest. Presently others began to drop in, as the news spread in various directions. Some of

the villagers, who had gone to bed, got up and dressed themselves, and hurried to join the party in the old church; so that by the time Archie and Bill got back after their round, the place was alive with lanterns and people. All sorts of rough salutes and jocose remarks were shouted through the doorway at the entrance to the spire.

At length Paul Jenkins, the night watchman, commanded silence, and when all was quiet, he called up the spire, and told its occupants to come down.

"There 's no use in stayin' up there, and freezin' yerselves any longer," he said. "Come down, boys, while we show you a light."

The bull's-eye of the watchman's lantern was turned upward, and several other lanterns were set in the lower part of the tower; and pretty soon it became evident from the movements heard above, that the parties up there had concluded to take the watchman's advice, and were on their way down.

There were only three of them—Tim McCoy, Sam Smallwood, and Joe Andree. Tim came to view first, followed closely by the other two. A more crestfallen, sheepish-looking set of fellows it would be impossible to imagine. Benumbed with cold, and mortified beyond the power of utterance at their ridiculous situa-

tion, their plight was scarcely less than pitiable. They were urged to come to the fire and warm themselves; and some of the bystanders took hold of them with a kind of mock sympathy, and pretended to chafe their limbs, but they were glad enough at the earliest opportunity to slink away in the darkness, and find refuge from the teasing crowd in their own homes.

"Yis, yis; go home, b'ys," said one old Irishman, as he took his pipe out of his mouth. "Give it up this toime, an' thry again some other day. The luck was agin ye this toime."

"What was they a-doin' up there?" asked a newcomer, his eyes full of wonderment at the scene.

"Shure," said the old man who had just spoken, "they thought they had a call to jine the angels; an' they was on the way up."

"O, be that the way of it?" said an Englishman. "I 'm glad I come; I never seed a hangel afore."

The interest was now diverted from these parting shots at the retreating figures, by a discovery that had just been made which explained the "smoking-out" of the school that night.

Silas and his comrades had noticed in their first search of the room, that the stovepipe of one of the stoves had been taken down, and was lying on the floor; but so intent were they on other ob-

jects, that they had taken little account of this circumstance. But now, other curious eyes, prying into the hole where the stovepipe entered the flue, discovered that the chimney was stuffed full of damp hay. It was the chimney with which the down-stairs stove was connected. So, it appeared that the particular business of Tim McCoy and his friends in the upper room that night had been to place this obstruction in the chimney; and they had enjoyed to the full the embarrassment and consternation of the teacher and pupils, little imagining what a dismal turn the affair would take for them before it was ended.

In a day or two, every feature of the whole miserable business came to light. Sam Smallwood and Joe Andree were so chagrined at the outcome of the plot, which had resulted in making them a general laughing-stock, that they told all about it.

At first, it had seemed to them the jolliest sort of a thing to smoke out the school in revenge for their own expulsion. Tim had contrived some "business" as an excuse for going to the company's office at the dinner-hour, when only the office-boy was in charge; and as he had several times before been sent to the old church on various errands, he knew where the key was kept. He had no difficulty in securing it when

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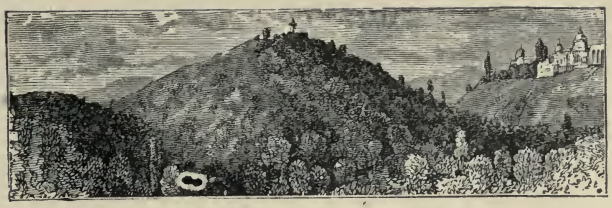
the boy's back was turned. The rest of the scheme was easily carried out. It was a very simple matter, after dark that evening, to take enough damp hay to the church to stop up the chimney and cut off the draft.



Chapter XI.

SCHOOL CLOSES, AND WORK BEGINS.

SOME situations into which wrong-doers bring themselves are so humiliating, and so cruel in their exposure to public ridicule, that no one thinks of resorting to any legal measures for the punishment of the offenders. All Camerton was laughing at the boys whose mean attempt to embarrass the night-school had resulted in such an out-and-out discomfiture to themselves. No great harm had been done to property or person; and the community—always on the lookout in idle times for some new excitement—had been furnished with a genuine bit of adventure on the one hand, and, what was even more welcome to the many, new victims for their mirth-making propensities.

It could scarcely have added to the mortification of the three boys if they had been sentenced to a term in jail; and, certainly, no place on the

face of the earth could have presented more discomforts or positive torments to the luckless trio than they found in their own village, where everybody knew them and was diposed to chaff them at every turn. The appearance of any one of them on the street for the next few days was the signal for a chorus of derisive shouts, and a regular fusillade of rough jokes from those who saw them.

Archie and Mac were standing at the post-office door, waiting for the mail to open, the second day after their adventure in the old church, when, all at once, the movement of the crowd which always assembled there at that hour in the afternoon indicated that a subject had been found for the daily merry-making. Sam Smallwood and Joe Andree were seen passing along the cross street in company, at no great distance from the post-office. Instantly a shout went up, with cries of "Halt!" "Put down that hay!" "Come and get your mail!" etc. As Sam and Joe took no notice of these invitations other than to hurry on and get out of sight of the crowd as soon as possible, half a dozen of the latter started to run after them, and presently reappeared, arm in arm with their victims, whom they compelled to face the crowd and listen to the numerous uncomplimentary allusions to their late inglorious adventure.

While this was going on outside, a man who stood just inside the door remarked:

"I ain't much on Scripture; but there 's a text that 's just come to me, and I think it fits these fellows very well."

"What is it?" inquired Mr. Shryock, to whom the remark was addressed.

"It 's something about them that transgresses finds it hard," replied the other.

"The way of transgressors is hard," said Mr. Shryock, quoting the text to which the other man alluded.

"Yes, that 's it," was the reply; "some people takes an awful sight o' pains to make trouble for themselves."

As for Archie and Mac, they soon ascertained that the affair in the old church had done something more for them than merely to make them prominent in the public eye. Over and over again they were compelled to tell the story of the search, and to answer the numerous questions of various groups of listeners. But we must do them the justice to say that it was no mere feeling of gratified revenge that now possessed them. Publicly prosecuted as they had been, and condemned upon a false charge, they had lived from day to day upon the expectation that they would yet be vindicated.

The late all-absorbing incident was some-

how connected in the minds of the people with the trespass trial which had resulted in so unjust a sentence upon Mac and Archie. But the two boys were now in the popular mind fully and finally cleared of that charge. The revulsion of feeling in their favor was as decided as any legal reversal of the judgment against them could have made it. Perhaps only those who have walked under the dark cloud of unjust condemnation for a season, and then have found the popular confidence and favor returning to them once more, can fully appreciate the peculiar bearing of the late events upon the standing of these two boys before the community.

As we have already seen, Sam Smallwood and Joe Andree did not hesitate to relieve their own mortification, and in some sense atone for their part in the mischief, by exposing "the wicked partner," who had devised the scheme and led them on in every step of its execution.

They had enjoyed a great deal of fun, in the early part of the evening, over the consternation of the teacher and pupils, who were compelled to rush out of doors every few minutes to get a breath of fresh air. Most of the remarks, and proposed solutions of the difficulty, could be distinctly heard by the trio in the upper room, and the coughing, the wiping of the

eyes, and involuntary tears of those down-stairs were enjoyed to the full, and mimicked in whispered tones.

They never dreamed of a search of the building that night; and when it was first proposed, greeted the suggestion as a bit of Silas Coleman's bragging. It was not until their escape was cut off by the guard stationed around the building, that they began to be really uncomfortable about it. But even then it never occurred to them for a moment that they would be in any danger of discovery in the spire. It seemed to be uttterly out of the question that anybody would attempt to ascend the spire in the darkness of the night, in pursuit of an enemy. Still, for greater security, they provided themselves with what they considered to be ample means of defense—brickbats, stones, etc.

But for this perfect sense of security, on Tim's part at least, they would have taken another chance of escape, suggested by Sam. It was that they quietly open the door, make a quick dash down stairs, and get away from the building, paying no attention to the guard.

Tim, however, would not listen to this proposition. To do a thing like that, he said, would be to "give themselves away" entirely. For they would certainly be recognized by the fellows on guard. He was sure, he said, that if

they took the trouble to climb up into the spire for half an hour, they could then go home like gentlemen, after Silas and his party had given up the search.

How mistaken Tim was in his calculation we have already seen. He was at first dumfounded, and then grew desperate when he found that Silas was actually on his way up the spire. It was against the protest of the others that he threw the brick, which came so near being fatal to Silas. They were willing to join in trying to frighten away pursuit, but not in seriously injuring or killing anybody.

This, at least, was the story told by the two boys, Sam and Joe. Meantime, Tim was nowhere to be found, much to the general disappointment. All Camerton seemed anxious to pay its respects to the "Imp of the Spire," as the boys now began to call him. Upon inquiry it was learned that he had thought it was a good time to pay a long-promised visit to an uncle living at a distance of twenty miles from Camerton. To use the ordinary local phrase, he had "cleared out between two days;" nor did he return till he was summoned several weeks later, together with all the other absentees, to resume his place in the mine.

The regular spring opening of the Camerton Slope came at an earlier date than usual. The

winter had not been long, but its unusual severity, and the numerous deep snows, combined with other causes, had greatly hindered the work, and the winter's output of coal had been very small. The men had worked only in relays, a part of the mine at a time, each entry taking a week in turn.

At the earliest possible period, however, all parts of the mine were put to work in good earnest, and Camerton took on once more its characteristic appearance in working times. It was a village where, in busy seasons, scarcely any one but women and children were to be seen during the day, the men and older boys being hard at work in the depths of the earth, under the village itself, and for long distances beyond in several directions. No one at all familiar with the locality, ever needed to ask whether the mine was working or not. In idle times men and boys seemed to be swarming everywhere—in the grocery-stores, in the engine-house near the mouth of the slope, or smoking and chatting in one another's homes. Camerton was described by a visitor as the *livest* and the *deadest* place in the country.

The night-school closed the next week after the mine resumed regular work. There seemed to be but one verdict concerning this first experiment of the kind in educational work, in

that neighborhood. It received the very general commendation of the people. Quite a number of the pupils had made marked proggress. In others, who were at first indifferent, Mr. Pancoast had succeeded in awakening a real desire for knowledge; and before the close of the term he was engaged to open another school in Camerton the next winter.

Chapter XII.

THE CAMERTON LITERARY AND DEBATING SOCIETY.

THE night-school bore fruit among the Camerton people in ways that were not anticipated at the outset. Indeed, it seemed to be the means of awakening the dormant intellectual life of the community, and discovering to quite a number possibilities of self-improvement and avenues of enjoyment hitherto unknown to them.

About two weeks after the close of the school, some of the pupils posted up the following notice on the bulletin-board, near the window of the weigh-office:

"All the pupils of the Night-school, and any others who may be interested in self-improvement, are requested to meet in the basement of the old church, on Friday night of this week, to organize a Literary Society."

When Friday night rolled around, the place was crowded with an assemblage that represented all classes and conditions of Camerton people. The company's chief clerk, Mr. Ashton, was chosen to preside over the meeting; and the general discussion which followed over the plan of the society seemed to justify Jerry Coulehan's remark:

"All hands is jest a-spilin' fur a speech."

The meeting was long and very spirited; and the presiding officer had his hands full in maintaining order and deciding who was entitled to the floor. There was in the main, however, great good-humor, and a hearty acceptance of the plan as finally decided upon. It provided for a debate as the principal feature, to be followed by declamations, the reading of original compositions, and a critic's report. The society was to be called "The Camerton Literary and Debating Society." It was to meet once a week, on Friday night. Every member refusing to take the part assigned him on the program was to be fined, unless he could present a sufficient reason for his failure. Mr. Ashton was chosen president for the first term of three months; and when the meeting adjourned, it was apparent to every one that the Camerton Literary and Debating Society bade fair to open its sessions, on the following Friday

night, with a full house and great enthusiasm. Woman suffrage—"Shall the Ballot be Given to Women?"—was the question selected for discussion at the first meeting. Archie Atkins had been named as one of the debaters. He was the junior on the affirmative side. His colleagues were Squire Hogan and Mr. Shryock. The negative was led by Mr. Henderson, the engineer of the stationary engine at the Slope, with Jerry Coulehan and Sandy Cameron as colleagues.

The week was one of much anxiety and hard mental labor to most of the parties who were down on the program. Most of the debaters had never taken much part in public speaking. Jerry's experience was limited to the part he had taken in what he persisted in calling "the famous trespass case;" and Mr. Shryock's public speaking had been confined altogether to Sunday-school and Church meetings.

Two young men were put down for original compositions who were wholly unused to such work, and they were greatly distressed at the appointment. One of them asked in utter despair, when told that he was to write an original essay, "What does it mean, anyhow?"

The few books kept on sale in the village stationery store, and also the private libraries, were thoroughly ransacked for any hints which

might furnish assistance to the orators and writers who were to take part in the grand opening the following Friday night.

Other members of the society, also, knowing that their turn would come, began to get ready. Quite a number of them practiced recitation inside the mine; and in every entry, one might hear snatches of "Spartacus to the Gladiators," "Casabianca," "The Burial of Sir John Moore," etc.

The rules of parliamentary practice also began to receive a good deal of attention. Men who had taken part in political meetings and Church meetings were appealed to for information about "motions," "seconds," and "substitutes." On one occasion all the knowing men in the south entry were gathered together, to try to settle what is meant by "the previous question."

Out of this intellectual ferment and sudden craving for information the local bookseller reaped quite a harvest in orders for "Speakers," books on composition and oratory and parliamentary practice.

The Camerton people never did anything by halves. Whatever might be the excitement of the hour, it was sure to command very general attention. It had the right of way to the exclusion of almost everything else, no matter

what its real importance might be. Just now the Camerton Literary and Debating Society was the theme of conversation everywhere. It aroused a fever of interest which had all the marks of a contagion. Among men, women, and children, inside the Slope and out, in the kitchens and "living-rooms" at home, in the ordinary "country-born" language, and in the brogue and dialect of the various foreign-born peoples that had made their home in Camerton, no other topic could hold its place in the daily conversation when once the Camerton Literary and Debating Society had been introduced; and it was introduced everywhere, and on all occasions.

One of the last to take the infection was Tim McCoy. At first he hooted at it, and made all manner of fun of the "spouters." But no one in Camerton welcomed the new excitement more than Tim. He saw his opportunity to rid himself measurably of the odium and unenviable prominence which his late misadventure in the old church had inflicted upon him. Tim, in truth, had seen a hard time since his return from his visit. He was better able, however, to fight his battle and retaliate upon his tormentors than most of them would have been in his situation. Never did his low cunning, aptness at repartee, and readiness to take advan-

tage of the weaknesses and blunders of others, stand him in better stead than on this occasion, when he was compelled to run the gauntlet of the Camerton wits, and serve as the butt of ridicule for all classes.

If Tim had employed all his time for the past few weeks in studying up the pedigree of the Camerton people in general, or in subjecting each person's character to a sort of microscopic examination for the discovery of its flaws, he could not have been better furnished than he was for the encounter.

Tim was not popular in the community. His nature was by no means lovable, and his principles were too lax to command the general esteem. But besides this, his alertness in gibe and jest had given him the advantage over very many in the wordy encounters which were very frequent, inside the mine and out. In the use of billingsgate he had no superior among the boys of anywhere near his own age. He had made the most of his ability in this direction, and had played the bully even over young fellows much older than himself, with the result that he had succeeded in getting himself pretty thoroughly disliked. His ascendency over some of the boys was due to mingled fear of him and admiration for his superior abilities.

No one knew better than Tim himself, how-

ever, that for once he had been caught napping. He had made himself ridiculous in the public eye, and would have to pay the penalty. But he was determined to make the work of tormenting him as costly as possible to all who attempted it. He struck back at his assailants without mercy. He opened up chapters of personal and family history which had the effect of compelling some of the chaffing crowd to beat a hasty retreat.

"Better let that boy alone," said Mr. Ashton, the head clerk. "He is opening up the closets, and dragging out every family skeleton in the place. What a delight he takes in parading them before the eyes of the people!"

The Literary Society furnished the people with a new theme, much to Tim's relief, as it was now possible for him to mingle once more with the various crowds of men and boys without being perpetually on the rack to defend himself from their rough jokes.

About this time a chance circumstance threw Tim in the way of Mr. Shryock. Never before had any one appealed to the better nature of the boy so directly as Mr. Shryock did that day, and not altogether without effect. As we have before intimated, Mr. Shryock had that kind of standing among the miners which superior intelligence and a blameless life always give. He

pointed out to Tim the folly and utter uselessness of the course he had been pursuing. He asked him, for the sake of others as well as himself, to quit his ridicule of the boys who were just beginning to take hold of the work of mental improvement. Perhaps, however, the motive which had most weight with Tim was furnished by the suggestion that he possessed natural abilities, which, if rightly directed, would elevate him to a higher position in life than he could possibly reach by following his uncurbed propensities for idleness and mischief.

Tim was not without respect for Mr. Shryock, and he went so far as to thank him for his good advice, and promised to leave the other boys alone. In fact, Tim began to share the prevailing view of the Literary Society.

"It 's a mill, gentlemen," he said, "to turn out big guns—men what 'll make speeches, and go to Congress, and write books, and such like. I 'm a-goin' to take a hand in it myself, if they 'll let me."

Visions of coming greatness had dawned upon not a few of the Camerton young men in the last few weeks, since the Literary Society had been under discussion; and the effect was, in general, stimulating and wholesome.

Friday night found a crowd in the schoolhouse which put standing-room at a premium.

Those having parts on the program might be distinguished from the others, not only by their burdened and anxious manner, but by their evident care to make a presentable appearance—they had their Sunday clothes on.

It may be observed just here that the average Camerton miner, in ordinary evening-dress, bore the unmistakable marks of his calling. Not only were his "finger-nails in mourning," but the eyes also. The obstinate dark circles about his eyelids—the distinctive badge of his occupation—lingered, as a rule, through the week, no matter how clean the rest of his face might be, till the regular and more thorough "washing-up for Sunday." It was allowable to carry black eyes through the week, but to so appear on Sunday was to lose caste.

The orators, readers, etc., at the opening session of the Literary Society, were in their best possible trim. There was nothing to indicate that any of them had that day been delving in a coal-mine, and had come out of it, a few hours before, as black from head to foot as the denizens of Darkest Africa.

The debate was a real surprise to most persons present. For "first attempts," it discovered a spirit and a degree of ability which could scarcely have been counted on in advance. Jerry Coulehan made a characteristic speech,

which brought down the house with thunders of applause. Archie was terribly frightened; but he had prepared himself with great care, and, with the assistance of his notes, got through his short maiden speech with tolerable credit, and furnished no doubtful assistance to his side in the argument.

Tom Peters, one of the young men who was down for a declamation, could not be found when his name was called.

"I guess he's runned away," said an urchin in the back part of the room. "I saw him go out."

"So did I," chimed in several other voices.

It turned out that this surmise was a fact. Tom grew faint-hearted as his part grew nearer, and disappeared as quietly as he could.

When the program was finished, the president stated that, by the rules adopted for their government, Tom Peters would be fined ten cents for failing to take the part assigned him.

"Mr. President," said Jerry Coulehan, "the circumstances in this case is aggrawatin'. I move you, sur, that we stick a fine uv a dollar onto this gentleman, for contempt uv court."

After considerable discussion, it was decided that there was no power to impose any fine upon Tom Peters in addition to the ten cents fixed by the rules.

Chapter XIII.

A CALAMITY IN THE SOUTH ENTRY.

AS the summer advanced, a new and peculiar danger loomed up before the miners of the south entry—a danger from which the other parts of the mine were exempt by reason of higher situation and distance. The men began to hold frequent and anxious conferences with each other to determine what it was best for them to do.

Before the last season had closed, the passageway known as the south entry had reached the boundary-line of the company's land, in a direction southward from the bottom of the slope. The men that drove the entry then received orders to change its direction from south to southeast, the intention being to proceed along the exact line of the company's property.

The order for this change of direction occasioned a good deal of surprise among the men.

An entry in a mine—as we have already seen—is a narrow passage-way proceeding usually in such a direction as to allow rooms to branch off from it on the upper side. Seldom or never are such rooms started from the lower, or "dip," side of the entry. As it was quite an unusual thing to push the entry forward in a direction that did not admit of opening up any more rooms, the mining-boss explained that there was reason to believe the territory of the company had been encroached upon by the Caledonia Company, whose coal-property adjoined that of the Camerton Company on the south side. The intention was to advance far enough to find out whether or not this was the case. The entry went forward at a rapid rate, being driven by three shifts; that is, by three different sets of men, who relieved each other every eight hours.

But as soon as the entry was turned in this new direction, it began to be whispered among the miners that this advance to the southeast meant danger. The entry was now headed toward an old mine of the Caledonia Company, which was worked out and abandoned, and was known to be full of water.

"There 's water enough in there to drown out the whole south entry. Tap it once, an' there 's not a man o' ye that 'll get out alive."

This was said by Sandy Cameron, a Scotch-

man by birth, and one of the oldest miners in the slope. As he worked in the west entry, he was not exposed to the danger himself, but had quit his work that day to come and warn his fellow-miners in the south entry of their danger, which he declared was now increasing day by day.

Mr. Harris, the mining-boss, admitted the reasonableness of these fears expressed by the miners; and after consulting with Mr. Morgan, the superintendent, it was decided to make a new survey to satisfy the men. For this purpose an expert was brought from a distance, who went over the ground carefully, and confirmed the report previously made, that the south entry was strictly on the line of the Camerton Company's property, and that there was no danger unless the men of their own accord changed the direction in which they were then proceeding. This, of course, was not likely to occur, even through carelessness, as the daily visits of the mining-boss would prevent the men from getting "off the points."

"What 's that got to do wi' it?" said the venerable Sandy Cameron, when the report of the new surveyor was made known to the men. "We 're not questioning the honesty o' our own company. It 's the *other* chaps that we suspicion. I tell ye, mon, that I wrought in yon

mine [the Caledonia] when some o' ye was only wee bits o' laddies. It was one o' the first mines open in all this region, and the men that carried it on did n't know the meaning o' a compass. Mind ye, I 'm not saying that they meant to gouge coal that did n't belong to them; but the mine was driven by guess-work, and I tell ye there 's no assurance that they bided by the line."

The men felt that there was a good deal of cold truth in these suggestions; and, after a full conference of the miners in the south entry, it was decided to "bring out their tools"—which is the miner's phrase for quitting work.

Mr. Morgan, the superintendent, was determined, however, that the entry should advance. He would take every precaution to protect the men, he said—just as when an entry is driven toward a body of water for the special purpose of drawing it off and draining the mine.

The principal safeguard under such circumstances is to drill a small hole some yards in advance of where the men are at work. Believing that no harm could befall them as long as the drill went in advance, the men continued at their work, and the alarm on that subject gradually subsided. In the light of what afterwards happened, it seemed a strange thing that the men should have been satisfied with drill-

ing only in *one direction.* The danger-point proved to be, not in advance, but in a line intersecting the entry some distance back from the face.

One day, about two weeks after the drilling commenced, the rib, or wall, of the entry suddenly gave way under the great pressure of the water, and the awful tide, carrying ruin and death upon its bosom, poured into the south entry. The two men who were at work in the face of the entry were the first victims. They were overwhelmed and drowned, in all probability before they had time to realize what had happened. Then outward and still outward sped the terrible flood toward the rest of the men. The bursting of the entry wall resounded far and wide, like the explosion of a cannon, through the chambers where the miners were at work. Added to this, the awful rushing sound of the water in the distance, and the current of air set in motion, quickly told the men that the long-dreaded catastrophe was upon them.

And now, along the entry and through the cross-cuts, from room to room, began the mad race for life in front of the angry tide! To one fortunate circumstance was it due that any of the men in the south entry escaped with their lives—the channel through which the

water poured from the old mine into the Camerton mine was not large enough to discharge at once sufficient water to flood all the vast space of rooms and cross-cuts that had been opened up in the south entry.

The hapless beings who were nearest to the point of the flood's entrance were the ones that perished. As the tide found an ever-widening space over which to spread itself, its fury abated. It pursued the fleeing men less rapidly, and gave them a better chance for their lives; so that some who at first despaired, picked up heart, and continued the race to a place of safety.

Of the sixty-four men and boys known to be in the south entry when the flood burst upon them, forty-seven reached the lye at the foot of the slope alive. That they were alive, however, was all that could be said of some of them. The gust of wind that swept through the entry had extinguished many of the lights, and in the desperate race for life in utter darkness, the men were bruised and bleeding from their frequent collisions with timbers, cars, and the solid walls of the various passage-ways through which they had made their escape.

Some of them had fallen, stunned and helpless, and had been unwittingly trampled upon by their fellows. Two young men, brothers,

had laid hold of their aged father when the first alarm was given, and dragged him in the darkness through half a dozen cross-cuts, and over all sorts of obstacles, never relinquishing their hold till they brought him, more dead than alive, to the place of safety at the lye. It is probable that others also, who fell victims to the flood, could have made good their escape by rapid running, if their lamps had not been put out in the manner already described.

The alarm quickly spread through the other parts of the mine, and presently the lye was crowded with men, all anxious to see who of their fellow-workmen had escaped.

When the roll of the men and boys in the south entry was called by the mining-boss, there were seventeen who did not answer to their names. Among the missing were James Shryock, and his butty, Thomas Tangey. Two of the drivers, who were furthest on the inside that trip, also failed to respond to their names—Archie Atkins and Sam Smallwood.

Rescuing parties of the most able-bodied of the survivors had hurried back to the water's edge as soon as they had been able to get their lamps lighted, and were just in time to save two men, who had fallen crippled and exhausted, only a few feet in advance of the now slowly-advancing tide.

It was after all the searchers had returned to the lye from the flooded part of the mine, that the roll was called with the result already stated. The confusion and excitement that had prevailed up to this time, had prevented any correct estimate of the number and names of those who were lost, and the most contradictory reports were in circulation among the several hundred men who ran about in search of one another, and shouting out a score of names at once. It was not easy to get the crowd quieted down. Right beside the anxious faces of those who could not find the relatives they sought, brothers were embracing brothers; here a father suddenly discovering a son, who had been reported as lost; and there a man coming up with his butty, after having been separated from him in the race for life. But at last the boss was able to command silence, and the calling of the roll began. A groan, or stifled sob, was the only response when several of the names were repeated in loud tones for the second or third time. It indicated the utter giving way of the hope to which some had clung up to that very moment.

The injured men were now put into empty cars, and hauled up the slope by the engine, while the greater part of the others, a mournful procession, walked behind them.

A few, unwilling to abandon all hope of their comrades, volunteered to remain behind and watch the progress of the water. They would be at hand, they said, to show a light, and lend a helping hand to any one who might yet, impossible as it seemed, struggle out of the water. It was plain, however, from the look on the men's faces, that it was not *hope* which prompted them, but rather the melancholy feeling which inclines the living to linger about the newly made graves where they have buried their dead.

One of the number that remained behind was Archie Atkins's father. His grief was pitiful. He could not bring himself to believe that Archie was really lost. When urged to go home and break the news to his wife, he said:

"I can't do it. Tell her that I'm alive; but I can't go home without my boy. I can't leave my Archie in that awful place."

It was only a short distance from the foot of the slope to the edge of the fatal flood, and here the discovery was quickly make that the water had ceased to rise. The invading tide had spent its force.

Was it receding? The momentary gleam of hope which the question inspired, was quickly quenched by the dread certainty that those who had been caught in the embrace of that remorseless flood were none of them now alive.

But the water was not receding. The watchers advanced as far as they could in all directions, and eagerly scanned every point where a human being, living or dead, might be visible; yet nothing met their gaze but the forbidding water reaching out into the forbidding darkness. Save as they themselves broke the silence, the stillness of death reigned all about the watery tomb.

They were relieved at length by others, for the watch was made continuous. Rude rafts were constructed, on which men floated to the farthest possible points; but the search revealed nothing. The watery sepulcher refused to give up its dead.

Chapter XIV.

THE QUICK AND THE DEAD.

INTELLIGENCE of a calamity like that which had overtaken the miners of the south entry, usually travels very fast; nor does it lose anything in its detail of horrors as it flies. What had actually occurred was sufficiently appalling, but the first reports which gained currency in the village, and beyond, were wild exaggerations as to the extent of the flooded district and the number of the victims. One account had it that not a man in the south entry had escaped. Another rumor stated that the water had reached the lye, and that the escape of many of the men in the other entries was cut off.

All Camerton had gathered about the mouth of the slope, and was waiting in excited and anxious expectancy when the procession of miners reached the open air. Though the utmost had been done by the outside hands to cor-

rect the false reports, as to the number of the dead, by giving such information as had been sent out by the survivors themselves, yet the women and children thronging the mouth of the slope, where a guard of men prevented their entrance, could not be reassured until the men actually began to appear.

As one after another in the column emerged from the mine, shouts of joyful recognition rent the air, and women and children darted from the throng into the arms of husbands, brothers, sons, and fathers, who seemed to them, after the awful suspense of their waiting, to be given back from the very grave.

But, alas for those whose agonized expectancy had no such joyful ending! When the last man in the procession had reached the outside, when it was certain that no others, except the watchers, were to come out *alive*, then came the climax of disappointment and despair for those whose eager, searching eyes had missed the familiar faces for which they sought.

It was all the more bitter, because, for the past few minutes, they had found themselves possessed by a strange, new hope that the seemingly endless procession of men, slowly emerging from the mine, would not cease till it had brought to them, as to so many other women, the prizes they so agonizingly waited for.

Very remarkable was the change, within so short a time, from unreasoning despair to unreasoning hope. When the women first reached the mine, scarcely any of them would credit the definite and circumstantial tidings conveyed to some of them that *their* loved ones had escaped; but before half of the column had reached the open air, so numerous were the glad shouts of recognition that the revulsion of joyful feeling became general, and under the influence of this contagion of sudden hope, scarcely any in all that multitude believed it possible that *their* loved ones could fail to appear with the rest.

Several of the injured men were tenderly laid on stretchers, and carried to their homes by their comrades, where their wounds were dressed by the mine doctor. Others, only partially disabled, found plenty of stalwart shoulders to lean upon for assistance in walking to their homes. In little groups the people went their several ways, the gladness of those whose friends had escaped being tempered by the sorrow of a dozen families who had left behind them, in that watery tomb, some *one*, some *two*, of their members.

Between the Atkins family and the Shryocks a strong tie of friendship subsisted. Mrs. Atkins and Mrs. Shryock had for years been as

sisters to each other. Those two heart-broken women were conspicuous, even in that large group of mourners. None of the victims was better known, or stood higher in the public esteem, than the husband of the one and the son of the other. Together—scarcely knowing what they did—they at length suffered themselves to be led away to their desolate homes, by neighbors who pitied and respected their grief. It was little that could be done, either for them or for others of the bereaved; but there was no lack of kindly words and sympathetic tears.

On learning that the water was at a standstill, Mr. Morgan, the superintendent, and Mr. Harris, the mining-boss, re-entered the mine, taking with them a compass and a plat of the south entry. A sudden gleam of hope had arisen in their minds that some of the men, in the rooms farthest advanced above the entry, might have been simply surrounded by the water, and shut in without being drowned. A few calculations were quickly made, based on the present height of the water, and the notes of the mining-boss as to the distance which some of the rooms had reached from the starting-point at the entry—the farther they had gone up the grade to the westward, the greater the probability that the water had not reached the face of those rooms.

"There is no doubt about it!" said Mr. Harris, eagerly, as he finished his calculation. "Three or four of the rooms are certainly above the water-level!"

Mr. Morgan figured out a similar conclusion with respect at least to *one* of the rooms—Number 57. He was not so confident as to the others. The men who worked in 57—Shryock and Tangey—were able-bodied, expert miners, who had wasted no time in the dissipations so common among many of their fellow-workmen. The result of their steady industry was, that their room was farther advanced than some of the others immediately about them. It seemed certain that there was present safety at the face of Number 57, and possibly also in several of the other rooms.

But had any of the men been able to make their way to any of these places of possible refuge?

The question suggested by this investigation was quickly communicated to the people outside, by some of the men who had assisted the bosses in their observation, and the result was that, in a little while, quite a crowd of the workmen had gathered at the mine, to discuss the possibilities which this discovery had opened up.

To the statement of one of the men, that

"everybody in the entry must have heard the alarm, and started to run at once," Sandy Cameron replied:

"I 'm not so sure aboot that. Suppose some o' they men was sledging a breast o' coal? If it happened to fall aboot the time the water broke in, the noise o' the fall o' coal would droon out the soond o' the water in the distance."

The sum of the general discussion seemed to be that there was at least a reasonable possibility that some of the men might not have left the face of their rooms; or, if they had done so, and yet had found their escape cut off at an early stage of their flight, there was good reason to suppose that they would retreat to the highest ground they could find, and this would be at the face of the rooms; and they might possibly be there still, *alive* and *safe*—if they could but be reached!

"How can we get at them?" cried a score of eager voices.

The plans suggested were numerous enough:

"Pump and bail out the water!"

"Sink a shaft!"

"Drive a narrow gangway from the edge of the water so as to intersect the rooms that we want to reach!"

But the countenances of very many of the

men fell when the best-posted miners in the group declared that it would take several weeks to reach the desired place by any of the proposed methods, pushed with all possible energy. This conclusion was challenged by the advocates of the shaft plan of relief; and a spirited discussion followed as to the perpendicular distance from the surface to the vein of coal, and the nature of the ground to be gone through.

While the discussion was at its height, several of the older men were summoned to the company's office by Mr. Harris. Another plan was under discussion there, and the managers desired to consult with the men about it.

On the other side of the John's Mountain, a drift had been started many years ago; and then, on account of a change in the company's plans, it had been abandoned. No one in the office could tell exactly how far it had been driven; but its location was such as to justify the belief that, if it had gone any considerable distance, it certainly furnished the shortest route and promised the quickest method of reaching the imprisoned men.

At the bare mention of the old drift, one of the men clapped his hands.

"Bless my soul!" cried the old miner; "it's the very thing! Why didn't I think of it afore? I worked in that drift thirty years

agone. Me and Sandy Cameron worked there together."

Sandy Cameron was not in the group at the mine; but he was quickly brought, and was able to give more definite information than his old-time butty, Peter Stuart, as to the direction the drift had followed on the inside, and the distance it had been driven. He was enthusiastic in indorsing the plan of trying to reach the men through the old drift.

Mr. Morgan at once announced to the rest of the men, who were anxiously awaiting the result of the council, what their conclusion was.

"It is scarcely worth while," said he, "to talk about a shaft. The company has done enough searching of the mountains in this neighborhood to render it certain that it would require at least a month of the very best work that could be done to reach the point in the south entry at which we are aiming with a shaft. There are a good many yards of solid rock to drill through in reaching our vein of coal. We are as anxious to find the men by the shortest route as any of you possibly can be; and our best judgment is, that by opening up the old Buxton drift on the other side of the mountain, we shall reach them sooner than in any other way."

A cheer broke from the men at this point,

which interrupted the further words of the superintendent. So anxious were they to begin the work of rescue, and yet so hopelessly divided among themselves over the several proposed plans, that it was a great relief to have a new and better scheme authoritatively suggested by the management—a scheme to which all the men gave a hearty assent as soon as it was announced—and their impatience could scarcely be restrained long enough to receive the necessary orders.

Mr. Harris called the names of a number of men, who were to begin immediately, or as soon as they could get there, the work of clearing up the old drift. Another gang was to prepare a bed for a new track, as the old one was rotten and useless. Then, there were tools, timbers, cars, etc. to be conveyed across the mountain.

In a few minutes, the various gangs of men had received explicit instructions as to what they were to do; and then the men separated in all directions with a rush, the several gangs springing with great enthusiasm to the particular work assigned them.

Under such circumstances, there is a relief to the burdened heart in *doing* which nothing else can give. To be compelled to wait in idleness upon the scene of such a calamity, or

to feel that *something* ought to be done, and done *at once*, and yet to be uncertain *what* to do, is keenest torture to energetic natures. Happily, the plan selected was one which immediately enlisted the active co-operation of most of the able-bodied men in Camerton. Mr. Harris seemed to think of everything at once, and was able to gratify every man by giving him something to do.

The first gang that reached the old drift began work at once—with such tools as they had been able to pick up in their rapid run across the mountain—shoveling out the dirt that obstructed the mouth of the drift. They were followed, as soon as possible, by a wagon loaded with a complete outfit of tools, including wheelbarrows; and still another wagon contained timbers to secure the roof of the old drift, which, from long neglect, had fallen here and there, and was unsafe and ready to fall in many other places. A few minutes after the clearing-up began, a gang of miners, regularly equipped for work, crawled over the various obstacles of dirt at the entrance, and "falls" on the inside (as the piles of fallen roof are called), and pushed their way to the face of the drift, where they promptly commenced the excavation of the channel toward the south entry. The work of possible rescue had actually begun!

The fear that it might end only in disappointment sometimes found expression in the utterances of the men, but it did not diminish their energy. Strong and rapid were the blows upon the solid coal which began to resound through the old drift, where silence had reigned during so many years.

Chapter XV.

MINGLED HOPE AND FEAR.

IT was long remembered in Camerton, to the credit both of the management and the men, that a carefully calculated plan of rescue was put into operation so soon after a paralyzing accident, which at the first had quenched all hope as to any of the missing ones. It was about the middle of the day when the water broke into the Camerton mine, and in a few minutes rose to such a height that no one dreamed of a possible chance of escape for any of the unfortunates who had failed to make their way to the lye with the rest of the survivors.

Never had a deeper shadow rested on the Camerton Valley than during that afternoon. Slowly and sadly the people moved about, in a stupor of dismay and grief at the calamity which had overtaken them. Yet before the sun went down that evening a kind of electric

hope, kindled by a single suggestion, had darted into many a bosom, and roused the community from its despair. And not only this, but two hundred men had been set to work upon a plan of rescue—a plan which was decided upon after consideration had been given to all the others that had been suggested.

There was very little sleep in Camerton that night—for one reason, because there was so much to be done; and for another reason, because of the excited condition of the people.

The more the matter was discusssed, the more reasonable seemed the conclusion that *some* of the men had found refuge in the rooms already referred to as above the water-line at their face. No one dared to hope that *all* the men were there.

But who of them were most likely to be there?

This was a question of interest to all the people; but how it especially agitated the families of the missing ones, and chased sleep from their eyes, may be better imagined than described.

The strongest and most expert of the miners —"the bully miners," as they are sometimes half-derisively called by the others—were detailed for the work of driving the drift forward. As this was the hardest part of the undertak-

ing, and everything depended on progress *there*, the work was divided into shifts of one hour each. When the hour was ended, and time was called, the men quit work on the instant, and came out dripping with perspiration from head to foot as the result of the tremendous hour's exertion. The next gang of fresh men stood ready with sharpened tools, to begin work immediately, so that not a moment's time was lost. The rate of progress amazed even the miners themselves. None of them had ever seen anything to compare with it.

"She fairly jumps ahead!" said Sandy Cameron, who had been appointed to oversee the work in the absence of Mr. Harris.

The distance of more than three miles by wagon-road from Camerton to the Buxton drift was one glare of torches and lamplight all that night, as the two streams of men and wagons passed and repassed each other on various errands. By morning the most of the preparatory work was finished, the falls cleaned up in the drift, the roof secured with props and cross-bars; a regular dump had been constructed on the hillside a little distance outward from the mouth of the drift, and a new track had been laid from the dump inward to the face. A sufficient number of mine-cars had also been brought over from the Camerton Slope, to take the place of the

wheelbarrows which had been used at first, before the track was laid. And now, as soon as a car was filled with coal in the drift, it was pushed outside by a gang of men, and the coal dumped out of it down the hillside. Another gang at once took an empty car from the side-switch, and pushed it inside the drift, so that the loaders as well as the diggers might not be delayed.

The night was also one of hard work for the managers. In addition to devising and overseeing all the arrangements which have been mentioned, another important question which had to be settled was the precise direction which the drift must take to reach the desired point. A passage-way under ground can not be driven with any accuracy by mere guess-work. Here the compass is to the miner, just as it is to the mariner on the ocean, the only reliable guide. The first shift of miners had received from Mr. Harris the best "guess-work points" that he could give them, to begin on; but as soon as he had selected the several gangs of men for the various parts of the work, together with the superintendent, he began to run the lines across the mountain, to find out the exact course the drift must take.

This was no easy job in the darkness of the night, as the ground was for the most part rocky and rugged, making the observations very difficult. The Camerton officials, however,

received very valuable assistance in their survey from the managers of the neighboring mines, and were glad to have their own judgment confirmed as to the course to be taken, by the calculations of others.

It was decided to head the drift for Room 57, in the south entry. There were several circumstances which rendered this room the most probable gathering place for any men who were still alive in the south entry. One was its advanced position beyond the several rooms immediately adjoining it. Another reason was, that it was intersected by cross-cuts on either side, connecting it with the neighboring and less-advanced rooms, thus giving the men in those rooms a chance to escape into 57.

The men who had worked somewhat at random all night, were greatly gratified when they received the points for 57 about daybreak next morning. The guess-work course had to be changed somewhat, but a direction surprisingly near the true one had been taken in starting out. It added greatly to the satisfaction of the men, however, to know for certain that they were now on the right course.

It may be well to explain here that what are called "the points"—by which miners drive their entries, rooms, etc.—are simply pieces of string, suspended perpendicularly from nails

driven in the roof, and weighted at the lower end with bits of iron or coal to keep them steady. These strings are hung in the exact course which the passage-way is to take, and serve to direct the course somewhat in the same way as the "sights" on a gun-barrel. One man holds his lamp at the face of the room, while his butty stands at the strings to do the "sighting." The light is moved from side to side, as may be necessary, until the two strings and the light come into line. By this simple method a passage-way may be driven in a straight line as far as the eye can see a light in the distance. The points must of course be moved, from time to time, nearer to the face as the chamber advances, and this can only be done reliably by the aid of the compass.

After twenty-four hours of work, when the rate of possible progress was pretty well ascertained from what the men had already done, there began to be much anxious figuring upon the length of time it would take to reach 57. The distance that the drift must advance had been fixed by the survey, so that it became the simplest kind of a problem to ascertain how long it would take at the present rate of progress.

All the calculations agreed in making the time not less than seven days! One estimate

made it almost or quite eight days! The men held different opinions as to whether the present rate of progress could be maintained, and hence their estimates varied as to the time required for the work. In the short-time estimates no allowance had been made for accidents which might cause detention.

Then, too, the nature of the ground to be gone through could not be foretold with any certainty. Sometimes, for yards together, the coal is, as the miners say, "as soft as ashes;" then it changes, and becomes "as hard as flint." In the one case the progress would be rapid; in the other, much slower.

The calculation which made the time a little over seven days, of twenty-four hours each, was based on the possible rate of progress in "average ground"—such as was encountered at the start, or during the first day's work.

As soon as it was generally known to the people that a full week, at least, must elapse from the time of beginning the work before the fate of any of the missing men could certainly be known, the inquiries began to be very numerous as to whether the rescue might not be too late after all!

"How long could people live without food?"

All the accessible books and newspaper accounts, which told of men who had survived

long fasts, were eagerly read; and the old miners had very attentive listeners as they furbished up the tales they had heard in their youth of similar disasters, which had overtaken the miners of this and other countries. Incidents, full of thrilling interest, were given of men who had been imprisoned underground for longer or shorter periods—sometimes by water; sometimes by the settling of the roof over large areas, etc. With kindly consideration, and no little art, the more tragic features of these various calamities were left out, and only those incidents brought into the foreground which might serve to keep hope alive in the bosoms of the afflicted families.

Not all the stories, however, were of this cheerful sort. Men who worked as hard as any of their comrades, when their shift came, sometimes admitted that they had no hope. They would shake their heads very ominously, and then—looking carefully around to see who might be listening—go on to tell of direful calamities, in which the plan of rescue succeeded only in recovering dead bodies.

Another question was: Suppose several of them are together, confined in a few yards of space at the head of one of the rooms, will they not perish in a day or two for the want of fresh air?

Could fresh air from the outside penetrate so large a body of water?

These and other questions were earnestly discussed by the people, and the various and contradictory opinions held on these subjects would, under other circumstances, be found very entertaining, if not also amusing. They served to show, at least, how little of real information exists, in many quarters, upon subjects with which everybody is supposed to be acquainted, and with which everybody *ought* to be acquainted.

It is only fair to remark, however, that communities claiming a higher order of intelligence than the people of the Camerton valley would find themselves somewhat puzzled, and far from unanimous, in the attempt to answer the questions which had become problems of great moment to the miners and their friends.

Chapter XVI.

INCIDENTS OF THE WORKING AND WAITING.

IT was on Friday that the water broke into the Camerton mine—"Black Friday" the day was afterwards called. As the work of opening up the old drift began the same evening, and was continued for twenty-four hours before any precise calculations were attempted, the questions referred to in the last chapter formed the staple of conversation for the people on Saturday night. There must be at least six more days of anxious waiting before anything could be certainly known; and *then*—

But the people were thoroughly tired out after these two days of terrible tension and the utter sleeplessness of the night before; and, generally speaking, they retired to rest at an early hour. Almost the only exceptions were the men whose turn at the drift came in the forepart of the night.

The next day was Sunday. The morning dawned bright and clear; and the greater part of the people, refreshed by the night's rest, were in more hopeful mood than some of them had been the evening before.

Even Mrs. Atkins had been able to sink into a quiet slumber toward morning, after several hours spent in earnest, agonizing prayer. It was broad daylight when she awoke; and she seemed to be no longer the sorrow-stricken woman of the two preceding days.

"O George," she remarked to her husband, "I have had such a good sleep, and it has refreshed me so! But I think it was a dream I have had, or something like a vision, that has done me even more good than the sleep. It seemed to me that 'a shining one,' as Bunyan would say, stood by me and said, 'Cast thy burden on the Lord, and he shall sustain thee.' I did just what he told me, because I was afraid to disobey; and the promise was fulfilled. I had a feeling of relief that was wonderful. It seems so strange that what I could n't do yesterday, try as I would, I have been able to do in my sleep since midnight."

George Atkins said but little in reply to his wife. He had passed another sleepless and anxious night. Being a practical miner, and one of the most intelligent of the craft, he was

as well able to estimate the probabilities in the case as any of the others. All night long he had kept vigil, sitting in his arm-chair—the old wooden rocker in which he always rested after his day's work was done. Over and over again he had made the simple calculation which so many others had been making; but he found it impossible to figure out a result that brought any comfort to himself.

It might be that the drift would reach No. 57 within the expected time, and that several of the men might in that way be rescued; but his own knowledge of the situation led him to believe there was little ground to hope that either of the drivers was in a position when the flood came to avail himself of the refuge which the higher rooms afforded.

Then, too, he was conscious that his bearing toward his boy had been somewhat unfortunate—he had been unfatherly and unsympathetic without meaning to be so. This ground for self-condemnation was the bitterest ingredient in his cup of sorrow. He felt at times that he could scarcely contain himself; he must see his boy at once, living or dead. It would be a priceless boon even to fold the dead body in his arms, and speak into the ears that could not hear, words of fatherly affection such as had never passed his lips before.

Then he would chide himself for sitting still and doing nothing to help on the work of rescue. How could a true father be content, he asked himself, for others to do all the work in the drift? True, he had not been content. He had begged piteously to be allowed to take his turn with the other miners; but the men had been a unit in denying his request. They had told him that his place was at home, and that he must leave the work of rescue to *them*, while he did what he could to comfort and encourage his wife—the mother of his boy.

He knew that the miners who were pushing the drift ahead were picked men; that they were straining every nerve, doing all that mortals could do to open up a way of escape for any possible survivors on the inside; yet there were times that night when he felt that he could do the work of *twenty* men, and that he must rush to the spot, take hold of the work, and do it all himself.

His wife's more peaceful mood served to subdue in some measure the fierce, consuming fever that possessed him; but even she seemed to break down again before they had finished their simple breakfast.

Just outside the window of the room that served them as dining-room and kitchen, a grassy hillock rose abruptly to the height of five

or six feet. Upon this slope, so near to the window that one might almost touch them, a small flock of robins gathered every morning as if expecting to be fed. Mrs. Atkins was accustomed to shake the tablecloth out of the window after breakfast, to feed them with the crumbs. The birds were unusually tame, and seemed to watch for the tablecloth as if they understood that it contained food for them.

Archie had become greatly attached to these robins, though he had very little opportunity to see them except on Sundays, as on other days he was compelled to hurry to the mine at an early hour; but on Sundays he always fed the birds himself, and would watch for them as if they were his own peculiar treasures.

It was the coming of the robins on this particular Sunday morning that, for the moment, broke in upon Mrs. Atkins's newly-found comfort, by the contrast which was suggested with the Sunday before. When the birds perched as usual upon the bank, and began their morning song, while seeming to wait for the tablecloth to make its appearance at the window, Mrs. Atkins could not restrain her tears.

"You dear little creatures," she said, "Archie isn't here to feed you this morning. He's shut up in the dark mine, and he must be awfully hungry himself by this time."

It was the thought that her boy, if alive, was suffering the pangs of hunger, in addition to his other distresses, that unnerved her. She well knew that those pangs must increase from day to day to utter torture, before relief could reach him.

It was but a moment, and then her former quiet state of mind returned with the memory of "the shining one" she had seen in her dream.

The neighbors wondered that day at the change in her manner. They noted the fact that she spoke of Archie as if he were certainly alive. Nor did she waver in her belief that he would soon be restored to her. She talked freely of her plans for nursing him out of the enfeeblement which starvation and long exposure to dampness must result in.

The usual order of service was not followed in the Camerton churches that day, but the three congregations—Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist—worshiped together. The people of the community had been drawn closer together by what had befallen them in the last few days, and the proposition to spend the Sabbath in united prayer found general and hearty acceptance. So the people met at the usual hour of worship in the Methodist Church, the largest building of the three.

There was no regular preaching that day,

but the church was crowded with thoughtful, reverent, sorrow-stricken worshipers, whose burdened hearts were yearning to draw near to God. Very earnest were the petitions of the miners for their imprisoned and imperiled fellow-workmen in the mine, and for the success of the undertaking which sought to relieve them. The families, too, of the missing ones were tenderly mentioned at the Throne of Grace. So peculiar was the situation that no one certainly knew who had been bereaved, and who had not; but the burden of all the prayers was, that the faith of those for whom a bitter disappointment was in store might not utterly fail.

There was a rude but real eloquence, and a heart-touching pathos, in many of these verbal supplications; and at times the voice of the speaker was lost in the earnest "amens" and stifled sobs which manifested the deep feeling of the people. The effect of the service was heightened when, toward its close, several of the miners, returning from their work in the drift, all black as they were, and in their mining clothes, entered the church by the rear door near the pulpit, and stood among the throng of worshipers, in full view of the congregation. They entered heartily into the service, and one of them, who was called on to pray, responded with a liberty of fervent utterance and an all-

pervading unction that fastened the gaze of the people upon him, as if a prophet of the Most High had suddenly appeared in their midst.

Again that afternoon, and also at night, the church was thronged with people, and services of a similar character were held, the several pastors being present at all the services, and leading them in turn.

Meanwhile the work went forward at the drift with clock-work regularity, and no abatement of energy and progress, either night or day. On Monday it began to be evident that some arrangement must be made to supply fresh air at the face of the drift. The air was "getting bad," the men said. It is usually found needful that passages underground shall be driven in pairs, the one parallel to the other, and connected with it at intervals by cross-passages, known as cross-cuts. It is then possible to have a free circulation of air, the current entering the one passage, and coming out through the other. In a single chamber, driven for any considerable distance, no free circulation of air can take place, and the atmosphere becomes foul and oppressive.

It is perhaps a fortunate circumstance for the men who must breathe such an atmosphere, that nature utters her protest in a way that is not to be disregarded—the lamps refuse to burn when

the air is "bad," or they burn so feebly, and go out so frequently as to occasion no end of trouble and delay. On this account the lowest and most sordid motives combine with the highest to compel attention to the important problem of ventilation. The method employed for ventilating the drift was a very simple, and yet a very effective one.

Mr. Harris at once set the carpenters at work to make an air-box, a tube constructed of planks, and running from the outside in, nearly to the face where the men were at work. The fresh air was forced in from the outside by means of a revolving fan. This fan was at first kept in motion by the men, until a horse-power could be rigged to do the work. As the drift advanced the box was lengthened on the inside, and by this means an abundant supply of fresh air was furnished to the hard-working men at the face of the drift.

Another subject to which the management had given careful thought was, how to draw off the main body of water, so as to recover the bodies of the drowned as soon as possible, and at the same time open up the work again in the south entry. This matter was second in importance only to the work of rescuing any who might be still alive; and on Saturday night a force of men and a number of water-cars were started

in the south entry, to see what impression could be made upon the water by continuous bailing. The water-cars after being filled, were hauled out a short distance to the top of the grade, where the plugs were knocked out, and the water ran down in the ditch beside the track to the sump, or reservoir, at the lye, where the powerful pump, connected with the same rope which hauled the cars out of the mine, forced the water out also. These men were divided into shifts of a few hours each, and the work was pushed with as much expedition as possible, night and day.

In the meantime a set of large iron pipes had been ordered which were to be laid through the drift into the water, as soon as communication should be opened, and from the mouth of the drift down the mountain side, sufficiently far to operate as a syphon.

It was a fortunate circumstance that the formation of the country admitted of this syphon arrangement; making it probable that the greater part of the water could be gotten rid of without the delay of building an engine and a set of pumps for that purpose. The pipes for the syphon began to arrive on Tuesday, and the work of placing them in position and connecting them into a continuous pipe-line was quickly accomplished.

Chapter XVII.

DISCOVERY—JOY AND SORROW.

THE work in the drift proceeded without any special incident until Thursday. The rate of progress upon which the original estimate of the management was based, was fully maintained, and in some of the shifts exceeded. It was little less than a miracle that no serious accident occurred; for such was the ambition of the men to force the drift ahead that, to save time, risks were taken which in ordinary mining would be pronounced reckless, and even foolhardy. Each shift was stimulated to the utmost, not only by the main object, but by the determination not to be outdone by the shift that went before, or the one that came after. That none of the men sustained any injury in this almost mad race was due, in great measure, to the constant watchfulness of the managers and sub-managers, who, by relieving each other

every few hours, were able to keep a constant oversight of the work, night and day.

On Thursday morning the superintendent and the mining-boss entered the drift, and told the men to stop work for a few minutes. By their calculation, the drift should reach the point aimed at in a little more than another day; and if any men were still alive in Number 57, it must now be possible to hear from them by the familiar miner's signal of knocking with a tool on the solid coal.

When everything had become quiet in the drift, Mr. Harris took a pick, and struck the head of it sharply against the face, giving five distinct raps—the first two being slowly given, and the remaining three in quicker succession, after the manner of beating marching-time on a bass-drum. Then, after a moment's pause, the five raps were repeated; and again, for the third time.

The men now grew breathless, and their hearts almost stood still as they waited for a reply. But no reply was audible. The men looked at one another, and disappointment was visible in their faces.

"Do you hear anything?" asked Mr. Harris, in a whisper.

"No," answered several of the men, in the same low tone.

Again the knocking was resumed. This time it was more prolonged, and again a silence followed that was painful in its intensity, no man moving a muscle.

But none of the listeners could detect the slightest sound in reply.

"This time," said Mr. Harris, "as soon as I quit rapping, all of you come forward, and put your ears against the face."

Again he struck the pick smartly against the solid wall, repeating the five raps several times over.

"Now," said he, as he dropped the tool, and placed his ear upon the spot where he had been striking. The men crowded about him, and followed his example.

Instantly one of them exclaimed:

"They 're knocking!"

"Hush!"

The men listened in silence; but even a stranger, looking upon their faces, could have detected that they were hearing sounds which made their hearts glad.

"On with your work, men!" said Mr. Harris, finally. "They are there! Thank God, *some* of them are there!"

The men resumed their work in good earnest, very greatly encouraged by this assurance that their undertaking would be successful.

"Mr. Harris," said the superintendent, as the two passed out of the drift together, "how far off are those men?"

"I do n't know," was the laconic reply.

"I take it," continued the superintendent, "that you are of the same opinion as I am."

"What is that?"

"That we ought to have heard them more plainly, if the distance is no greater than we have been calculating."

Mr. Harris was troubled. His joy at the discovery that some of the men were still alive, was quickly clouded by the same torturing perplexity which had entered the mind of the superintendent—the men certainly seemed to be farther off than they should be, at the present stage of the effort to reach them.

"Yes," was the reply of the mining-boss, after a brief pause; "there 's an awful blunder *somewhere*, and I can't see for the life of me where it can be. If we are on the right track, it ought to be easy now to hear a rap at the face of 57."

"We certainly made no mistake in our survey," remarked the superintendent, with some confidence.

"I hardly think the trouble can be there," replied the mining-boss, speaking very deliberately; "but," he added, a moment later, "if it

is n't there, the plat of the whole south entry must be wrong from 'A to Izzard.'"

Just as this remark was uttered, at the mouth of the drift, Sandy Cameron joined the two bosses. He had just come from home, to begin his three-hour shift as inside manager. On the way he had heard the good news of the response to the rapping, and was therefore taken aback at the perplexed manner of his two superiors. When the matter was stated to him, he quickly responded:

"And what sort o' an answer are ye asking for from men a'most dead wi' famine and bad air? Do ye expect that they would be able to hammer like giants refreshed wi' new wine?"

"You 're right, Sandy," replied Mr. Harris, with something of relief in his tone. "I did n't stop to consider their weakened condition. That may account altogether for the faintness of the sounds; and possibly we are all right yet."

Sandy's suggestion afforded a reasonable solution of the difficulty; and it had a good effect in keeping up the spirits of the men, some of whom had noticed the dilemma of the bosses, and had begun to lose heart.

The news that the men had been heard from reached Camerton very quickly, and kindled a general feeling of rejoicing from one end of the village to the other. Some of the people

at once began to make preparations to leave home and take up their abode near the drift, so as to be on hand when the men were brought out; but they were stopped by a peremptory order from the superintendent. As the presence of the people in or about the drift could only prove an embarrassment to the workmen and a hindrance to the work, no one but the regular hands would be allowed upon the premises until the finish was close at hand; and the families immediately concerned would be notified in time.

On Friday Mr. Morgan and Mr. Harris again entered the drift, to see if they could get a new response to their knocking. It was not, however, until the second effort that they succeeded. But this time, to their great gratification, the sounds were much more distinct.

If the rappings had been made by men under ordinary circumstances, they would still have seemed to be a considerable distance off; but allowing, as already suggested, for the enfeebled condition of the party on the other side, it seemed probable that they could be reached inside of another day. This at least was the conclusion of the management; and the people were notified that they might assemble at the drift that night, but that they should be prepared to spend the night there if necessary.

They were not to leave their homes before eight o'clock.

There was no need of any second invitation. Scarcely a "corporal's guard" besides the sick and aged remained in Camerton that night. The mine-doctor and several neighboring physicians were also on hand. Stretchers, blankets, and various nourishing foods were provided in great abundance. Fires were kindled, and kettles of hot water kept in readiness for any necessary use, and, close beside them, pots of fragrant coffee, kept sufficiently warm upon the outer edge of the coals.

The families of the missing men were very fully represented. Scarcely a member of any of their households would consent to remain at home. Though divided into several small parties, they really constituted a group by themselves. The fearful strain of anxiety was plainly visible in their countenances, and even strangers from a distance mingling among the Camerton people had no difficulty in picking them out of the throng. Some of them moaned aloud under the burden of their affliction. It seemed as if the suspense must kill them if it continued much longer.

The work at the face was going forward with the same persistent energy as before. Shift followed shift during the early part of the

night, just as for a week past; but each successive set of men retired with a feeling of disappointment, because, after the turn of the day, each shift had indulged the hope that it might be their privilege to finish the work and be the first to set eyes on the lost men.

A few minutes before eleven o'clock that night, what proved to be the last shift went on, with a "clean breast" before them. While engaged in undermining (cutting a narrow channel horizontally under the main body of the coal), one of the men suddenly cried out:

"Hush!"

Every tool was dropped in a moment. Mike McClenahan had struck his pick through into vacancy! A few more lightning-like strokes, and he had opened up a hole several inches in diameter.

"Hulloa there!" cried Mike.

"Hulloa!" was the feeble response.

"Who 's in there?"

"There 's six of us."

"Who are you that 's talkin'? I can't make ye out."

"James Shryock."

"Good! Who else is with ye?"

"My butty; Thomas Tangey, Archie Atkins, Sam Smallwood, and the two Poles."

These latter were foreigners, with long, un-

"HUSH!"

pronounceable names, and were always designated as "the two Poles."

"What 's become o' the rest o' the men?"

"We don't know."

"Keep up a good heart, boys," cried Mike. "We 'll soon have ye's out o' there."

While the miners rapidly opened up a passage big enough to crawl through, the rest of the men flew outside with the news.

The doctors at once entered the drift with the bosses, accompanied by a party of men carrying stretchers. All others were kept back by a strong guard at the entrance.

It was a pitiful sight which met the gaze of the men, as they followed one another into the face of 57. Shryock was the only one of the party who seemed to be clearly conscious. He was sitting on the floor of the room, and close beside him lying at full length, were Archie Atkins and Sam Smallwood, with their heads resting in Shryock's lap. Both of the boys were insensible, as were also the two Poles, who lay close together, a little distance from the others. Tangey had roused somewhat, but seemed only dimly to comprehend what was going on.

Only a few yards from the face the dark water-line was visible; but beyond the six already mentioned, there was no trace of a human being, either living or dead.

Chapter XVIII.

CARE FOR THE LIVING—BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

A LITTLE stimulating cordial was at once administered to Shryock and Tangey, and then, supported by the men, they managed to walk outside. The others were laid upon the stretchers, and carried into the open air for treatment. It was some time before either of the boys showed any signs of returning animation, and more than once the people gathered about them shook their heads dubiously, as effort after effort on the part of the doctors to bring them to, resulted in failure. Their youthful frames had proven less able than the others to resist the combined attacks of noxious air, chilly dampness, want of food, and, more than all, the awful foreboding of despair; for at first none of the party had any thought of possible rescue. The boys had been the first to yield to insensibility, and when rescued they were so utterly spent

that the flickering spark of life was with difficulty kindled again into its wonted flame.

Mrs. Atkins prayed beside her boy, sometimes audibly, while the doctors worked with him as he lay upon the blankets brought from home. At last, however, he opened his eyes, and tried feebly to respond to his mother as she called his name. There was bewilderment upon his face, an evident oppressive sense of recent terrible events, struggling with uncertain apprehension of the present strange scenes all about him.

"Archie, darling, you are safe. You are here with your mother and father. It 's all over, dear."

Then, after another struggle, the boy regained consciousness perfectly. It was now clear to him that he had been rescued. He put his arms around his mother's neck, as she leaned over him, and pulled her face down close beside his own, and cried for joy. The next moment he recognized his father also, and threw one arm about his neck. The father had never known such a moment of happiness in all his history. It seemed as if he would hug the boy to death, while the crowd of spectators cried and rejoiced at the same time with the rejoicing family. Then the doctors interfered, to forbid any one else speaking to him. So feeble was he, they said, that a little overexertion now might prove fatal.

Shryock and Tangey were soon able to give an intelligent account of what had befallen them, of their failure to hear the sounds which had apprised others of the danger. So hard at work had they been that they knew nothing of what had happened in time to attempt an escape. The two Poles came bounding into 57 through one cross-cut almost at the same instant as Archie and Sam rushed in through the other, chased by the tide, whose force was now nearly spent. Happily the occupants of the room were able to recover their dinner-buckets and coats before the flood covered the place where these belongings were usually placed. Then came the never-to-be-forgotten agony of that waiting to see whether the water would rise high enough to overwhelm and drown them in their prison.

These few things the men were compelled to say, to satisfy the eager crowd of people that waited for their words with almost breathless interest. But as the questions came faster and faster, and promised to be endless, one of the doctors again interfered, and asked the people to wait for the remainder of the story, and not tax the exhausted men too far.

These three happy families, constituting a group by themselves, did not, however, absorb the whole attention of the people. The physicians had passed from one to another of the

sufferers as promptly as possible, and scores of willing hands were quickly employed, under the doctors' directions, in the various endeavors to restore all the party to consciousness.

One of the Poles responded to these attentions, and regained his senses at about the same time as did Archie. He looked round about from one to another in a dazed sort of way, and then, as the fact of his deliverance clearly dawned upon him, he began to pour forth, after a wildly happy fashion, his joy and gratitude in words which were unintelligible to all except his own countrymen, but whose import could readily be inferred. The other Pole and Sam Smallwood proved to be the most serious cases, and after several hours of effort neither of them was clearly conscious of what had taken place, or was now taking place about him.

Sam's parents were greatly distressed, and it required no little art on the part of the doctors to comfort them with the assurance that Sam would "come out of it all right." As to the still unconscious Pole, they could promise very little. His case presented serious features of collapse, not found in any of the others in the same degree.

Shryock and Tangey asked their neighbors to join them in a short service of prayer and thanksgiving before they left the place for home.

Somebody started a familiar hymn, which was sung very softly but with soulful earnestness by the little group; and then, as by one impulse, they dropped upon their knees while the two rescued men audibly offered thanks for their deliverance. They were followed by others, who praised God that the dead were alive again and the lost ones found.

Nor did they in the midst of their rejoicing forget to pray for those distressed families to whom the outcome had been so terribly disappointing. No possible hope remained as to any of the still missing men. It was evident from the height of the water-line in 57 that, if any of them had sought refuge in the adjoining rooms, the flood had risen high enough to overwhelm and drown them.

The first faint streaks of dawn were visible in the eastern sky when the people began to form the line of march back to Camerton. Four of the rescued party were carried on stretchers. Shryock and Tangey professed their ability to walk, but were not suffered to make the attempt. In large wagons, with plenty of straw and blankets under them, they rode together with their families. The wagons went very slowly, to avoid jolting, and all the parties reached home in safety.

Sam Smallwood recovered consciousness in

transit across the mountain, to the great joy of his parents, who had never left his side for a moment. He would not consent to be taken to his home till he had seen Archie and the rest of his late fellow-prisoners.

All of them were reported that evening as doing well—as well as could be expected—except the unfortunate Pole. His rescue had come too late. He lingered until about midnight, and then breathed his last just twenty-four hours after his deliverance from the mine.

After the men were gotten out of the drift, the pipes of the syphon were quickly connected; and before the people started for home, the pipe-line had begun to discharge a great volume of water down through the Caledonia Valley. The water-cars in the south entry had already made some impression upon the water; and now, under the combined attack of both these agencies, the flood began very perceptibly to give way.

At first the perpendicular fall of the water was slow; but as its wide surface gradually contracted, the descent was more rapid. In the afternoon, it was possible to float on a raft through the cross-cuts on either side of 57 into the face of the adjoining rooms; and in one of them, two bodies were found. The men had evidently sought refuge there from the advancing flood, but only in vain.

From this time onward, bodies were recovered at various intervals, and in different parts of the entry, until all had been accounted for. But few of them were found in the rooms where they had worked. For the most part, it seemed that they had been overtaken in their race for life—a race in which they had no chance against their swifter adversary, by reason of the darkness. He could laugh at such an obstacle; to them it was a fatal hindrance. Some of them were found in places where only utter bewilderment and panic could have carried them; but, under all the circumstances, the marvel was that so many should have escaped the fate of the unfortunate eleven.

The bodies were not all recovered until Monday; and it was decided to hold public funeral services the next day. Little groups of mourners had already followed each body to its last resting-place, and the solemn funeral rites had been performed in the usual manner.

About half of the lost men were Roman Catholics—communicants of Saint Michael's Church at Hawksville, more than two miles distant, over which Father Rafferty presided. Hawksville was but little larger than some of the other mining communities immediately surrounding it; but on account of its being the seat of the big church where Father

Rafferty and two assistant priests officiated every Sunday, it enjoyed a proud pre-eminence. It was, in fact, the religious headquarters for half a dozen mining villages.

Father Rafferty was well known and very highly esteemed in all the region round about. The contrast in personal appearance and manner between him and his fellow-priests was often remarked by the people. He was well advanced in years, of spare build, and quite tall, with a decided stoop in his shoulders, mild blue eyes, and a kindly expression of countenance. He was of grave and reverend aspect, and exercised great influence for good over the mixture of various foreign peoples who constituted the major part of his flock.

Notwithstanding the fact that one of the junior priests was a native German, and that the three priests taken together were masters of several languages besides the English, it was still needful to employ the aid of interpreters in ministering to the needs of their great parish. The assistants were both young men, not so tall as their superior, and more inclined to corpulence; and though the one was a German, and the other an Irishman, their rotund forms and ruddy features suggested a sameness of pattern which made it easy to mistake the one for the other.

Father Rafferty's service for the dead was held on Tuesday morning, in the presence of a great congregation of both Protestants and Catholics, which crowded to excess every foot of space in the large edifice. After mass had been celebrated by the junior priests, Father Rafferty delivered an address, which, for its tender sympathy, its pathos, the singular beauty of its language, and the earnestness of its appeal to the living to prepare to meet their God, was remembered for many a day.

Late in the afternoon, the Protestant service was held at Camerton. So large was the concourse of people that it was deemed best to abandon the attempt to occupy any of the churches. The people assembled in the large hillside cemetery, where the several ministers who had charge of congregations in the village conducted the services, each of them delivering an address. Again, as in the morning service, Father Rafferty's people and the other congregations mingled together; and a deep sense of solemnity rested upon all alike. The people were greatly affected; and hundreds of them wept during the plaintive singing and the touching utterances of the several pastors.

After the religious services were over, the newly-made graves were plentifully bestrewn with flowers.

Chapter XIX.

THE RESCUED PARTY TELL THEIR STORY.

AS was natural, the desire of the community to hear all that Shryock and his late fellow-prisoners had to say about their terrible experience could not be long restrained. People were curious to know what they were doing when the flood burst upon them, and in particular what they did, what they said, and even what they thought, after it became a certainty to them that their escape was cut off.

If they had been actually resurrected from the dead they could scarcely have been the subjects of a more lively interest than they had now become, after being entombed for a week under such peculiar circumstances.

As we have seen, Shryock and Tangey had already told as much of the scenes through which they had passed, as the doctors would suffer them to tell, on the night of their rescue.

As their systems responded readily to the restorative effects of nourishing food and home comforts, they were able in a day or two to answer all the questions which their neighbors and friends so eagerly propounded.

It was not, however, until Archie and Sam had contributed their mite to the fund of information that the whole story was fairly before the people. But for the testimony of the boys themselves, the community would never have known of the self-denying efforts of the elders of the party to save the lives of their younger companions. But Archie and Sam, with great minuteness of detail, told all about it—how the morsel of food which Shryock and Tangey had brought from home for their own dinners, on the day of the flood, was saved for the boys, and forced upon them; how, even despite their protests, they had been wrapped up in the men's coats, to protect them from the chilly dampness; how they had slept in the arms of their benefactors, for additional warmth; how they had been instructed in religious things, and led to cast themselves upon God's mercy for the forgiveness of their sins through Jesus Christ, and had obtained a good hope of everlasting life. Besides this, Shryock had been strong in the conviction from the first, or after the first twenty-four hours, that they would be rescued.

To the others of the party, who knew the facts of the situation as well as himself, rescue seemed impossible. They knew no method sufficiently speedy by which their friends could get at them, or get rid of the water.

Shryock did not pretend to tell them how the rescue was to be effected. Of this he knew nothing. But on the second day of their imprisonment it came to him "like a revelation," he said, that God would bring them out. He told his companions this, and though they professed to be incredulous, they really lived upon his inspiriting and confident words. He was their prophet and high priest; he stimulated their waning vitality, and toned up their powers of resistance against their worst foe—an atmosphere that grew more and more poisonous as the days went by.

In response to a request for a detailed account of his own situation when the flood came, Archie said:

"I had just placed an empty car in Number 60, and was on the way down to the entry, leading my horse by the bridle, when I first heard the rush of the water, and felt the wind. The sound was awful, and I shall never forget it. I tried to save my lamp from going out, for I felt that my life depended on it; but the current of air was too strong, and in spite of all I could do, the light

went out, and, almost in the same instant the water struck me, as it rushed up from the entry. I thought I would give the world for time enough to light one of the matches in my pocket.

"There was only one thing to do, and that was to turn and run back up toward the face of the room. It was plain sailing, of course, while I kept the track, and I managed to dash along about as fast as I ever did anywhere in my life. But the water kept close to my heels for awhile, and sometimes I thought it was gaining on me. But I got the start of it at last, and then I determined to try to get through into 59, and to work my way outward if I could find the cross-cuts. Once or twice while I was feeling for the cross-cuts the water caught up with me, and I had to wade. I knew where I was all the time, and I tell you I was glad when I got through into 57, and saw their lights only a few yards away. It was the first light I had seen since my own was put out.

"Sam Smallwood came through the cross-cut just after I did. I must have passed him on the way; for he was outside of me when I started. I heard the sound of fellows scrambling along just as I was. I don't know who they were; but twice, when I found the cross-cut we were all searching for, I shouted out, "Here it is! Here 's the cross-cut!" and then

hurried on. There was no chance for me to get out any farther than 57, as the cross-cut on the other side was lower down, and was filling up with water. We had to move up toward the face of the room, the next moment after we got into it. The Poles had got into 57 before I did. They came through from the other side. Their escape had been cut off in the outward direction, and they turned back to the higher ground in 57."

Sam Smallwood had substantially the same experience as Archie, in running up toward the face of the rooms to keep out of the way of the water, while at the same time trying to work his way out of the entry as far as possible through the cross-cuts. His face was bruised and bleeding when he reached 57.

"I ran against a prop in 59," he said, "and it stunned me so I didn't know where I was for a while; and I stuck right there till the water hit me and waked me up. It seemed like it was comin' in big waves. I thought I was a goner, sure enough; but right then I heard Archie's voice ahead o' me, and I knew it. He hollered out, 'Here 's the cross-cut—this way!' I expect he must 'a' rushed past me while I was standin' an' foolin' at that prop. I made a quick dash or two, and got ahead o' the water again and through the cross-cut. Some poor fellows must

'a' been drownded right behind me. 'Pears like I can hear 'em yet, the way they hollered for God to have mercy on 'em when the water knocked 'em down."

Sam shuddered as this awful experience came vividly to his mind once more.

The six who found themselves imprisoned in No. 57 were in a sad situation. Escape was cut off on both sides; and the still advancing water drove them farther up the room, toward the solid wall known as the "face," which marked the utmost limit of possible retreat.

The only ray of hope was in the fact that the water was now rising less and less rapidly. Very anxiously they looked into each other's faces, and measured over and over again with the eye the distance that yet remained between the water-line and the face of the room.

"It 's going to stop rising presently," Shryock said; "and it may be a matter of a few feet, or perhaps only a few inches, with us. Let 's tear up the track and gather up all these loose timbers, and make a kind o' crib out of them at the face. We may need it to climb up on out of the water.

It was a relief to be doing something, and they worked at it with a will, the Poles assisting them as soon as they could be made to understand what was intended; for they knew

very little English, and communication was had with them as much by signs as by words.

A crib, large enough to hold all the party on its top, was soon erected. It reached upward two-thirds of the distance to the roof; and a sufficient number of four-inch scantlings were found to make a level platform on top.

As soon as this was finished, they again began to watch the progress of the water.

"I believe in my soul it's quit risin'!" cried Sam, as he held his light down close to the water's edge.

"Thank God for that" said Tangey. "We'll soon tell for certain," he added, as he took a nail from his pocket, and with a sledge drove it into a prop to mark the height of the water.

Others of the party fixed marks of their own, and then for some minutes they sat down and watched them, each with his eye fixed intently upon his own mark. They were satisfied at last that the water had ceased to advance.

"Thank God! thank God!" passed fervently from mouth to mouth.

"We are safe for a while, at least," remarked Tangey.

"Now," said Shryock, "let us give thanks to God for sparing us for this little while; and then we'll think what to do next."

Down they got on their knees at the water's

edge. It was not the first time that the voice of prayer had been heard there. Under other and more favored circumstances, the two butties had been accustomed to talk with God audibly in that room, and to sing his praises in concert. It was not in derision that No. 57 had been designated by the other miners "The School of the Prophets."

After the prayer was over—a prayer in which a plea for deliverance was joined with an equally earnest plea for reconciliation to the Divine will, whatever that might prove to be—they left the water-marks where they had placed them, and entered on a long and earnest discussion as to any possible hope of rescue.

"In the first place," said Tangey, "nobody outside will think for a minute that it 's possible for anybody to be in here alive."

"If they only knew that we are alive in here, they 'd work mighty hard to get us out," remarked Archie.

"Of course they would," replied Sam; "but they 'll not be thinkin' now of findin' anything but our dead bodies, and "—he was going to add something else, but his lips quivered, and he stopped short. A moment later he continued: "I 'd like to see my mother before I go. It 's mighty hard to be took away like this, without a chance to say good-bye."

This was the first sign of "giving way" that any of the party had shown, so intensely occupied had they been; but the feeling quickly became contagious. The impulse of grateful relief which had led them to rejoice in finding a temporary refuge was now giving place to an overmastering sense of the fact that their doom was none the less certain because it had been stayed for a while.

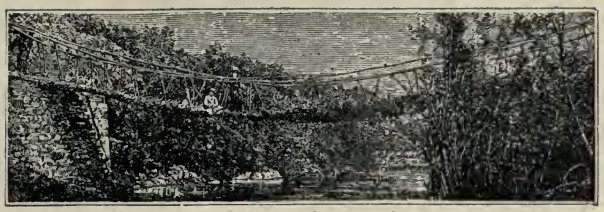
Sam's reference to his mother had turned the thoughts of all toward the loved ones at home, and the boys were not alone in brushing away the tears which began to plow white furrows down grimy cheeks. It was some time after this before any one spoke.

It is a trite saying that home and friends and the dear scenes of childhood are never so inviting as when one is leaving them forever. To each member of this little beleaguered group, looking into the face of death, the home that he had left behind that morning seemed the truest type of paradise that he had ever known, and his heart clung about its inmates with a fondness which no effort of words can describe.

When conversation was resumed, it turned again upon possible plans of rescue; and it is worthy of remark, that, as was afterwards discovered, just at the same time as the crowd in and around the engine-house outside were

debating the various plans of rescue which we have mentioned in a previous chapter, some of the very same plans were under discussion by the group on the inside. The drift plan, however, was not thought of, and each of the others was dismissed with the despairing remark:

"If they only knew that we are alive, they could do it."



Chapter XX.

STORY OF THE RESCUED PARTY CONTINUED.

EARLY in the evening the party proceeded to make what arrangements they could for their comfort during the night. If any one asks how they could know what time of day it was, the answer is, by the amount of oil which Shyrock's lamp, the only one kept burning, had consumed. Their supply of lamp oil was limited, the supply of fresh air still more so; and to economize in the use of both, all the lamps were extinguished except one.

Shyrock's lamp was selected as the solitary luminary because its owner had experimented with it sufficiently in other days, to be able to measure time with it with a good degree of accuracy.

Most miners are accustomed to judge of the passage of time underground, in a rough way, by the same method; the length of time that a

lampful of oil will burn depending, of course, upon the size of the lamp, the thickness of the wick, and, as much as anything else, whether the lamp is stationary or in motion. A lamp in constant motion upon a miner's cap, consumes more oil than when it hangs stationary in one place.

Shryock's estimate was that his lamp, when in motion, with the wick at the ordinary height, would burn "for a neat two hours," once filled with oil; but hanging where he now placed it, upon a prop in the center of the room, and with the wick, for economy's sake, turned low, it would last "for a good two hours and a half." The lamp, therefore, not only gave them light, but became their time-piece as well. A clean piece of scantling, marked with a bit of chalk, was used to keep the score, and every time the lamp was filled with oil the time of day or night thus indicated was marked with the chalk.

It was decided that the lamp should be kept burning continually, night and day, as long as the oil lasted; not only that they might keep the run of the time, but for other and more important reasons. The depressing effect of continuous darkness is very well known; and, besides, it was determined that they would not all go to sleep at one time. There should be a continuous watch night and day, so as to be ready for

any emergency, such as the rise or fall of the water, and particularly as there was good reason to believe that the effect of such an atmosphere as they must now breathe would be to bring on a stupor, from which there might be no awakening. They wished to keep alive and conscious, for a few days at least, to see if any possible deliverance might reach them, though they knew no way of escape, and had little real hope. It would be easier for the watchers to keep awake if a light were burning, than if they must sit in total darkness.

The night was divided into three watches—from eight to twelve, from twelve to four, and from four to eight. Shryock and Archie had the first watch, Tangey and Sam the second, and the Poles the third.

The preparations for the night's repose were of the simplest character. Several piles of "slack," or fine coal, were dug, to make as soft a bed as possible, and each of the sleepers fixed a lump of coal, or a block of wood, in such a way as to serve for a pillow. When these arrangements were completed they sang a hymn, and Tangey, standing close by the prop which held the lamp, read a passage from the Bible, which, as we have before remarked, was a part of the furnishing of the room. Shryock followed with an earnest, tender prayer, in which

he seemed almost to forget his own situation in his concern for the loved ones of their several households, who, doubtless, were at that very time in an agony of distress on their account.

Four of the party now stretched themselves on their beds of slack, and were not long in wooing sleep. The reaction, after the terrible excitement of the day's events, was on them. There was nothing that they could do to help themselves; there was nothing to be done but to *wait*, and waiting was already becoming monotonous.

As soon as the others lay down to rest, Shryock took down his lamp from the prop, and he and Archie went down to the water's edge, a distance of scarcely ten yards, where they sat down, partly for the purpose of watching the water, but chiefly that they might talk without disturbing their comrades. The various marks indicated no change in the position of the water. It was not advancing, and indeed they had ceased to apprehend any farther rise; but though they looked long and steadily at the marks, they were compelled also to admit the disappointment of their secretly-indulged hope of a perceptible decline. The water-line remained persistently just where it had been several hours before. The conversation then passed to other subjects, and, first of all, to the probable term of life that remained to them.

SHRYOCK AND ARCHIE IN THE MINE.

"How long," asked Archie, "can any one live without anything to eat?"

"I don't think it's worth while to meddle with that question at all," replied Shryock. "It's not starvation that's going to kill us, but the want of fresh air."

"Will it be hard to die in that way?" queried Archie again.

"I don't think it will. Haven't you noticed that in church sometimes we get drowsy when there's a big crowd of people there, and no ventilation? I remember once," continued Shryock, "in the big meeting we had four years ago, when the old church was packed night after night so you couldn't get standing room, the air used to get so foul the lamps would n't burn."

"Did they go out?" asked Archie.

"Not entirely out, but they would get so low we couldn't half see. The preacher would beg for fresh air; and he said the people who made a church that couldn't be ventilated ought to be put in the penitentiary. Then some of us sawed a piece out of the strip that held up the upper sash, so we could let down the window from the top. That night, when the air got foul again, we went around and lowered the windows; and when the fresh, cold air rushed in, something like snow seemed to fall down on the people's heads. I didn't know what to make of it; but

others saw the same thing, and said it was very queer. But I've found out by reading, that real snow is made in that very way. The air will get so foul here by and by, I think, that the lamp won't burn any longer; and then, after a little, our lamp of life will go out, too."

"Can we live a week?" asked Archie.

"Perhaps; but I'm not so sure of it."

From this the conversation turned to the future life, and the conditions of salvation through Jesus Christ. Archie was as eager to listen as Shryock was to talk. Passage after passage was read from the Bible and commented on in that plain yet direct and forceful style which made James Shryock's expositions of Scriptural truth so entertaining and profitable to young and old alike. True, it was the same old, old story which Archie had often heard before from the same lips; but the place, the time, the circumstances, all conspired to invest the theme with all the mighty force and reality of truth. Archie's heart was tender and receptive that night; and the things that had so often seemed to him mere matters of theory, and nothing more, now took on the character of very real and tangible matters of fact. He fed upon Shryock's words. They were bread to his hungry soul. And in response to the pointed, moving appeal of his friend and teacher, he felt

that he *could* and *did* accept Jesus Christ as his present, personal Savior.

When the lamp indicated twelve o'clock, Tangey and Sam were waked up; and the first watch "turned in" on their bed of slack. The Poles slept soundly until they were in turn called up for the third watch. At eight, all hands were aroused. So profound had been the slumber of forgetfulness on the part of one or two, that for some moments after they were awake they could scarcely realize where they were. Archie in particular looked around in seeming bewilderment, and began to shiver—with the cold it seemed at first; but as the full sense of all that had happened came back to him, a well-defined shudder took possession of him so that he could not keep still. All the party complained of feeling cold.

"Let us work a few minutes," said Shryock, "to get ourselves warm; and then we'll see what we can find for breakfast."

While three of the party took down the crib and rebuilt it a couple of yards away so as to allow more room at the face, two others dug some more slack; and Sam, taking up a shovel, said with a touch of humor that he would "make up the beds." He then proceeded to shovel over the piles of slack, so as to "turn the soft side up," as he expressed it. It took

but a few minutes of brisk work to get their blood in circulation, and dissipate the chill which had oppressed them on awaking.

Shryock and Tangey then brought their dinner-buckets forward into the center of the group; but before opening them, they invited a general consultation as to the disposition of the food. None of the party had tasted a morsel of anything to eat since their early breakfast at home the day before. The exciting scenes of yesterday had served in great measure to forestall appetite; but now, after their fast of more than twenty-four hours, hunger began to assert itself. Their stock of food was all contained in those two dinner-buckets, each holding an ordinary midday-lunch for one man. How should it be disposed of? Should they eat it all up at once, or should they hold back a morsel for several days to come?

Archie and Sam, and also the Poles, disclaimed any right to the food. It belonged to Shryock and Tangey, they said; and as death awaited them all, it made little difference who went first. The owners of the dinner-buckets, however, declared that they would never touch a morsel of it unless their comrades joined them; and it was then decided to make a three-days' allowance of the food, serving an equal morsel to each one, once a day in the morning.

It was a very small piece of bread that was dealt out to each of the party that morning, and it served apparently only to whet to a keener edge the appetite that had partially slumbered until then; but when the distribution had been made, and the morsel consumed, the remainder of the food was resolutely put away.

The water supply was as ample as heart could wish. It had settled, and become clear by this time, but the strong sulphur taste forbade the use of any more of it than was absolutely necessary.

Then followed morning prayers, solemn and extended religious exercises, in which all took some part, and each expressed himself in view of approaching death.

"There 's somethin' I want to say right now," said Sam. "I 've been wantin' to say it fur a good while, but 'peared to me I did n't have no good chance." Sam hesitated a moment, and then went on: "I done Archie a mighty mean trick about a year ago, an' I've bin awful sorry for it lots o' times since, but I was too big a coward to tell him about it. It was me and Tim McCoy that broke into Jerry Coulehan's spring-house, and stole his milk and butter, and had a fight with his dog. When we found out that there was goin' to be trouble about it, we blamed it on Archie an' Mac Castle,

coz we knew that they was on the mountain that day; for we saw 'em, an' fired rocks at 'em in the Welshman's Pass. That was the meanest thing I ever done in all my life," continued Sam, "and I want to ask Archie right here to forgive me, and I want to ask you all to help me to pray for God to forgive me, too."

"I forgive you with all my heart, Sam," said Archie, as he reached over to Sam, and shook him heartily by the hand. "I 'm sure you never would have done it if it had n't been for Tim."

"Thank you, Archie," replied Sam with great feeling, as he brushed away a tear. "You do n't know how I 've hated myself many a time about that thing. It 's a fact it was Tim that led me on; but I was too willin' to be led. I hope God will forgive me for what I done in that trial."

"Let us ask him to do so right now," said Shryock.

They got down upon their knees again, and after a few words of prayer by the elders of the party, both of the boys struggled through a short supplication, and then they rose to their feet again.

"There 's one thing more," continued Sam; "I want the people to know about this, and I'll not get out alive to tell 'em. I wish we had some paper to write on, so they 'd find it after

we are dead; but we have n't got it. How would it do if I 'd fix up some o' them scantlin's again' the rib, an' write on 'em?"

"Very well, my boy," said Shryock, as he rose to his feet, "we 'll soon fix a place for you to write."

Three of the cleanest four-inch scantlings were soon propped up against the wall, one on top of the other, so as to form a kind of board. Sam then took the chalk, and after spending some time in deciding on the form of his composition, scrawled the following words:

"Before I die I want to tell the people of Camerton that I swore a false oath again' Archie Atkins and Mac Castle. It was me and a pardner that done the damaje on Jerry Coulehan's place last summer.

"Sam Smallwood."

There was little variety in their mode of life after this, except that, after the third day, stupor took possession of them to such an extent that they lost their reckoning. This was partly owing to the difficulty in keeping the lamp burning in the vitiated atmosphere, and partly to the fact that the watchers could not keep awake to give the lamp the proper attention. Several times they found themselves in total darkness, after a general sleep of indefinite length, and lit the lamp again with matches.

Shryock and Tangey at last heard the unmistakable sounds of the work of rescue in the drift. They roused up their slumbering companions, and told them to listen for themselves. There was a general shout of rejoicing, and a service of thanksgiving in the now total darkness.

But again the almost fatal stupor crept over them. It became impossible to keep up even a semblance of a watch. Shryock would wake up at intervals, and use his utmost endeavors to arouse his companions, but found it, toward the end, an impossible task.

As may be readily imagined, the Camerton people listened with almost breathless interest to these recitals. They asked a thousand questions touching every feature of the terrible experience through which the party had passed, and seemed reluctant always to drop this subject for something else.

Chapter XXI.

TAKING UP THE OLD LIFE AGAIN.

THE next day after the funeral, Camerton Slope resumed work; and before the week was out, things were moving along at nearly the usual pace. The great calamity had become a matter of history. For the time it had absorbed every energy and every thought of the people; but its day was now past, and new duties and new cares crowded hard upon each other. The people were compelled to turn their attention from the past to the present.

It is not to be wondered at that, for a day or two, things went rather slowly; the men worked listlessly and with a kind of half-heartedness that was very unusual in the Camerton mine. Each man seemed to labor under a sense of oppression, that sat like a nightmare upon his energies. As to the men in the south entry—reminded, as they were at every turn, of com-

rades who had disappeared forever—the work of the rest of the week was only a "make-believe." It could all have been done in a single day under other circumstances.

To some of my readers it may seem strange that they could return to work at all after such an experience; and, indeed, candor compels me to say that there were those among the miners of the south entry who said that they could not and would not work again in the Camerton Slope; but notwithstanding these positive declarations, they fell into line with the others when the time came, and went on with their work as if they were wholly unconscious of having announced their intention of abandoning coal-mining for a living.

In this they were simply like other men engaged in dangerous occupations. Scarcely ever does a shipwreck occur, which drowns one-half of a ship's crew, but that the other half, struggling to save their lives, resolve that if they ever reach the shore in safety, they will henceforth remain on *terra firma* to the end of their days. But the rule is, that the typical sailor, well out of one great danger, returns to a seafaring life at the first opportunity, and proceeds to add one hairbreadth escape to another.

Railroad men exhibit the same tendency; and it is not difficult to find almost any num-

ber of veteran railroaders, bruised and scarred by various accidents, who have made and broken half a dozen resolutions to find some other and safer occupation.

Archie and his late companions in peril did not return to work quite so soon as the rest. The strain which they had undergone left its traces upon them for many a day. The shock to their nervous systems, the doctors said, had been a more serious feature in their case than even the lack of food or the poisonous atmosphere. By degrees, however, they recovered their tone, and at length went back to their former employment.

As was to be expected, Sam Smallwood's "Card" to the public, written upon the scantlings in 57, soon came in for its due share of consideration. Scores of the miners had gone into the drift, on the night of the rescue, to see the place where the party of six had been cooped up for so long. The scantlings, propped up against the rib, attracted their attention, and the writing was scanned with eager curiosity. The comments thereon were more emphatic than elegant, and can not for the most part be reproduced here; yet Silas Coleman and Sandy Cameron, who were among the first to read the writing, fairly voiced the prevailing sentiment:

"Camerton 'll be a mighty sight too hot for

Tim McCoy when this gets out," said Silas, after spelling his way through the writing.

"It 's the very thing that everybody 's believed all along," replied Sandy, as he put his spectacles back into the case, after reading the writing through a second time.

Tim was in the crowd that waited about the drift that night, and with the others went inside after the guard had been taken away. He little knew what was in store for him.

"Here, laddie," said Sandy Cameron, who had just finished his comment as Tim came up; "here 's a message for you;" and, with a look and gesture equally expressive, he pointed to the writing.

Tim was not to say a good scholar, but he took in the import of the writing much more promptly than some of the others who read it that night, and he was not long in making his way out of the drift. He foresaw the consequences as clearly as any one else, and began at once to prepare to meet or evade them. It was fortunate for Tim that the attention of the people was absorbed in the care of the rescued party, and the attempts made to restore them to consciousness. Then came the finding of the bodies of the others, and the funeral—matters which intensely occupied all Camerton.

Finally, however, the interest of the people

returned to Sam's written statement, and numerous questions were propounded to him covering every feature of the subject. His account of the matter was frank and full, Shryock and Tangey confirming his statement that, in the face of what seemed to be approaching death, he had confessed the wrong done to Archie, and had sought and obtained his forgiveness.

In the meantime Tim McCoy was nowhere to be found. Just as after his *fiasco* in the old church-spire he found it convenient to pay a visit to distant friends, so now he slunk out of sight again, no one knowing anything about his disappearance till some days afterwards. His father declared that he did not know where Tim had gone, and in this it was believed that he spoke the truth.

By regular process the judgments against Archie Atkins and Mac Castle for trespass upon Jerry Coulehan's premises were reversed, and the fines which they had been compelled to pay upon the perjured testimony of Tim McCoy and Sam Smallwood were refunded.

Jerry Coulehan, on learning that his proud victory in his first law-case had resulted in the conviction of innocent parties, was not a little distressed. He came to see Archie, not only to congratulate him on his escape, but to apologize for his mistake in prosecuting him.

"By me sowl!" said Jerry, "I 'm the manest feelin' man that iver was. I'd raythur that me tongue should clave to the roof uv me mouth than be guilty uv prosecutin' innocent people."

"I know that very well, Jerry," replied Archie, "and I never thought any the worse of you for it. If I had, you know, I would n't have been on as good terms with you in night-school and debating society as I was."

"Ay, that 's so," remarked Jerry. "It 's a noble lad that ye are; and I hope ye 'll forgive the one mistake that I made in settin' out in me law business. That miserable spalpeen, Tim McCoy, led me asthray intirely; he swore agin' ye wid a face as hard as a brass monkey. Shure, an' the divil will niver have his own till he gets that same Tim McCoy."

Jerry drove around to all the homes of the rescued party, and presented them with such delicacies as his farm produced; but the choicest of everything was reserved for Archie. It did the old man "a power of good," as he expressed it, to watch his young friend drinking the milk and eating the apples and peaches which he brought in great abundance. On one of these visits Jerry said:

"I 'm doing a little detective work to find that scamp, Tim. I 've an idea that I know where his hiding-place is. Faith, an' I 'd give

ivery cent uv a hundred dollars to find him this minute."

"What for?" asked Archie.

"What for?—is it what for ye 're askin' me? Why, for the fun uv prosecutin' him," continued Jerry, as he swung his arms aloft after his accustomed manner in moments of excitement. "I 'd make a speech that wad be a caution to snakes. I 'd take hould uv him wid the red-hot pinchers uv me indignation, an' make him think that all the bottled thunders uv the day of judgment had leaped onto him to wunst. Och! but it wad do me a mortal sight o' good to have hould uv him in a court o' justice!"

The Literary Society, whose sessions had been interrupted by the late disaster, now went on again as before, and was in full blast when Mr. Pancoast came on to open up the winter term of the night-school. It did not take the teacher long to make up his mind that it would be to the interest of all parties—himself included—not to interfere with "The Camerton Literary and Debating Society." He therefore proposed that the society should be blended with the school, and have one night in the week to itself, and offered to take the part of critic. This suggestion met with ready acceptance, and the teacher proved to be a valuable assistant to the young members.

Jerry Coulehan's ambition to be a great lawyer in nowise abated as time sped on. His old cronies at Barney Dillon's gave him up as one who had utterly forsaken them, and ceased at length to make his new departure a subject of mirth. A genuine love of learning, re-enforced not a little by visions of future fame, seemed to have swallowed up the old appetite for drink; and one of the subjects on which he now grew most eloquent was the time which he had wasted in idleness, and the money spent for drink. "If I had it to-day," he said, "it would take me through the best college in the land."

It is to be doubted, however, whether Jerry's more regular attendance at Father Rafferty's church was prompted by any higher motive than a desire to study the reverend gentleman's oratory; but it was a great gratification to the priest that for any reason whatever Jerry had abandoned his habit of drinking, and was now giving more attention to religious duties.

Quite a degree of interest was awakened in Camerton Church-circles by the announcement, made a few weeks after the rescue of Shryock and his companions, that, on the next Sabbath, Archie Atkins, Sam Smallwood, and Mac Castle would offer themselves for membership in the Methodist Church. The late calamity had brought no greater dis-

tress to any one whose immediate family had escaped than to Mac Castle. He had made a very narrow escape himself, and ran up and down the lye at the foot of the Slope, searching in every corner for Archie. When it was too evident that Archie was certainly among the missing, Mac sat down on the ground and cried as if his heart would break.

It seemed to him a miracle that Archie had been preserved alive; and when he found that Sam and Archie had both resolved to dedicate themselves to God in public, as they had already done while imprisoned in the mine with death staring them in the face, he needed no second invitation to join them. After the miracle of Divine Providence which had allowed himself to escape, and at length brought forth his dearest friend alive, Mac felt that he could no longer hesitate to take a step which he had often debated in his own mind before, and which had been the subject of many a conversation between himself and Archie.

There was some delay on Sam's account. A self-confessed perjurer, he hesitated about connecting himself with the Church, when it seemed probable that the law was about to lay hands upon him; but it soon became evident that he had but little to apprehend in this direction. His own voluntary confession, and the extraordi-

nary circumstances attending the case, rendered the community in general very tolerant, and the officers of the law very reluctant to proceed to extremes against him. His father came forward and paid the fine which had been assessed for the act of trespass, and Sam repeated in Squire Hogan's court the same confession which he had made to Archie, and offered to bear all the legal consequences of his crime in giving false testimony; but, as we have stated, there was no disposition to carry the matter any farther.

It was not until all these matters had been adjusted that Sam felt free to present himself for Church membership. Many a heart was affected at the spectacle, and many a benediction, silent and vocal, was pronounced upon the three youths who came forward to the chancel of the church that Sabbath morning, and made public profession that their lives, so marvelously preserved, should henceforth be consecrated to God's service.

"That 's some more of Shryock's work," said one of the old miners as he came out of the church, after having warmly shaken the boys by the hand.

There was, in truth, abundant evidence before this that "The School of the Prophets," in Number 57, had not existed in vain.

Chapter XXII.

THE STRIKE.

THE winter, with its season of comparative rest for the miners, had come and gone, and the busy springtide was once more summoning all hands for another campaign, when there began to be rumors of strange doings at Barney Dillon's saloon.

It was reported that the upstairs front room was no longer to be occupied by the family, but had been set apart as a lodge-room, or place of meeting for a new secret order. It was difficult for the outside public to learn the object, or even the name, of the new organization. So carefully were its secrets guarded, and so non-communicative were those who had it in charge that, for once, the most curious people in Camerton were nonplused.

The air was thick with all sorts of conflicting, and even alarming rumors as to the purposes of

the new and mysteriously guarded society; but it soon began to be evident that those who talked the most about it really knew the least. The more discerning ones remarked the fact that certain well-known frequenters of Barney Dillon's place never took any part in these conversations about the new lodge. Whenever the subject was introduced—and it was introduced everywhere—they all pursued the same tactics; they relapsed into an attitude of stolid indifference, and left the talking to others. If asked a direct question, no item of information could ever be gleaned from them. They seemed to know nothing of the existence of any such organization, or who composed its membership. It was therefore shrewdly conjectured, by some, that the men who knew so little were really the knowing ones, and that the policy of silence was one of the rules of the organization.

The better class of the Camerton people began to be uneasy. They observed, so far at least as they could even guess at its composition, that the new order was made up of a class of men who, to say the least, were not model citizens. The quarrelsomeness of their dispositions, and the frequent brawls that grew out of their drunken sprees, were not the worst qualities of some of them. It was even said that several of these parties had "sobered up" of late; but there

THE SLOPE BARRICADED.

was nothing very reassuring in this, since they seemed to belong to that peculiar type of men who, in their drunken sprees, seem to be possessed of virtues which appear at no other time. The silence of these men was more ominous than any words which they might have spoken.

"The Brotherhood," as it now began to be called, was not long in showing its hand.

One morning, as the men began to gather about the engine-house at the usual time for beginning the day's work, it was found that the mouth of the slope was barricaded with timbers, so as to prevent the entrance of any one, and notices were posted on the timbers, and in various other conspicuous places, announcing that work would be suspended in the Camerton Slope until there should be an advance in wages. Each notice was decorated with a skull and cross-bones prominently displayed, while at the bottom, in a blood-red color, was a significant "Warning!" to any man who should disregard this notice.

There was great consternation among the men, as they arrived in constantly increasing numbers, and found themselves confronted by the barricade and the various notices which gave the only explanation of it.

There had been a growing dissatisfaction with the wages paid for months past, and the

miners in the employ of the various companies in the neighborhood had held several conferences with their employers on this subject. It was feared that a general strike was impending; but no one dreamed that it would be precipitated in such a way as this.

While the men at the Camerton Slope were still excitedly discussing this bold movement, word was brought that similar notices were posted up at the neighboring mines also.

"How could this blockade be put up here, and the night watchman not see it?" asked one of the men, with savage earnestness.

"But suppose the watchman helped 'em to do it?" replied another, with a knowing look.

A search was then made for Paul Jenkins, the night watchman. At first it seemed that he was nowhere to be found. The men who went to his home reported that he was not there; and his wife, who was in great distress, declared that she had not seen him since he left home to begin his shift the night before.

He was presently discovered, however, by the engineer, whose attention had been attracted by a strange noise which seemed to come from a dark corner in the rear of the engine-house. There stood Paul Jenkins, the night watchman, bound hand and foot to an iron standpipe. There was a gag in his mouth,

so that he could not utter any articulate sound, but was able to make the noises which had attracted the attention of the engineer.

The men rushed into the engine-house; and the excitement reached fever-heat when they saw Paul standing there, with his back to the standpipe, and so securely bound that he could scarcely move a muscle. It was impossible for him to get his hands to his mouth, or to reach any of the fastenings that held him from behind.

A little active work with the engineer's sharp knife, and Paul was able to stretch his limbs once more—much to his relief—and also to tell all he knew of the matter, which proved to be not a great deal.

"I was passing along between the engine-house and the weigh-office about one o'clock, when, all at once, some men stepped out from behind the office—I suppose there must have been a dozen of 'em—and the one in front said:

"'Paul Jenkins, you can go home now; we've got charge o' things here.'

"'Who are you fellows?' says I, 'and what do you want?'

"'Never mind about that,' says he; 'it'll be better for you to do just as we tell ye.'

"'I'll do nothing of the kind,' says I. 'I'm the watchman here, and have charge o' things

myself. You all had better go away, and not raise a disturbance around here.'

"'Then,' says another fellow, as he steps up close to me, 'if ye won't do as we're telling ye, we'll have to tie ye up. We ain't a-goin' to hurt ye; but if ye make any noise about it, ye'll get this;' and he put a shooting-iron in my face.

"Then they felt in my pockets for the keys of the engine-house; and, when they got the door unlocked, they marched me in here and fixed me the way you saw me."

Paul Jenkins's metal had been tested in various affrays before, and he was known as a brave and reliable man; so that the men who were now listening to him were of the opinion that he had told the exact truth as to what had happened.

"Who was them fellows?" asked one of the miners.

"I don't know," was the answer. "They had their faces tied up, so I couldn't see 'em very well; but I don't believe they were our men."

Now that the men had all the light on the subject that they were likely to get, there seemed to be but one opinion among them as to the authors of this bold scheme. Though no one pretended to say who were the individual actors

in the plot, the men did not hesitate to attribute its inception to the new organization that had been formed in their midst. Their worst fears were confirmed; it was only too evident at last that they had in Camerton a lodge or branch of the much-talked-of and much-dreaded "Mollie Maguires."

Mr. Harris ordered the outside laborers to remove the timbers which barricaded the mouth of the slope. The men looked at one another, but not one of them would move. They were sorry to disobey him, they said, but they did n't want to make themselves marks for the vengeance of the "Mollies."

Hoping to overcome the fears of the men and to induce them to follow his example, Mr. Harris went to work himself in a very resolute manner. With his own hands he removed every timber out of the way, and then he ordered the engineer to start the engine.

"I shall have to think awhile about that, sir," was the answer.

Before Mr. Harris could make any reply, a number of the men, who had been holding a brief consultation, came forward, and Sandy Cameron, who was their spokesman, said:

"Mr. Harris, if ye'll suffer a word o' advice from some o' us, we 'd like to say to ye, do n't insist on starting the mine to-day. There's a

big trouble at hand, and we've got it to meet. We want to meet it in the best way that we can. We don't want to make any false steps at the outset. It's a question o' human life that's looking us in the face, and we must be a little careful. Give us one day off, and we'll call a meeting this afternoon, and get to the bottom o' this thing, and we pledge ye that if there's any kind o' tolerable security for us, some o' us at least will go to work to-morrow."

Mr. Harris could see no better way out of the dilemma, and so he assented to this proposition. The horses were sent back to the stable, the engineer banked up his fire, and the miners selected a number of active young men to go at once to all the neighboring mines, and summon the men to a conference.

In the vicinity of Hawksville a large pasture-field, known as "the big meadow," had for many years been used as a convenient place for large, open-air meetings of the miners. It was a popular resort for picnics, Sunday-school gatherings, and political mass-meetings. The natural features of the locality gave some countenance to the notion, often expressed by the people, that the place was made for just such uses. The nearly level field contained several clusters of trees, and various other shady nooks, made by the vines and undergrowth which

thickly lined a small stream of water, fed by the never-failing springs in the hillsides, and which wended its way, with many a curious turn, along the side of the field nearest to Hawksville.

It was at the opposite side of the field where the speaking usually took place. Here the open field terminated in a small forest of oaks and maples on rising ground, which furnished a very inviting shade. A speaker's stand had been erected at the edge of the woods, while the auditory generally sat or reclined on the luxurious and largely moss-carpeted sward under the shade of the trees.

A great concourse of miners assembled at this place at two o'clock that afternoon, in response to the request of the Camerton men for a conference. After the meeting had been regularly organized by the appointment of a president and a secretary, Sandy Cameron mounted the stand so as to be the better seen and heard, and stated that the Camerton miners had called the conference to find out, if possible, who was responsible for the blockading of the slope, and the posting of the notices which announced a strike, and, by implication at least, pronounced a sentence of death upon any man who should continue to work. For himself, and on behalf of his fellow-miners in the Camerton Slope, who had requested him to speak for them, he de-

nounced this action as an outrage upon the rights and liberties of the Camerton men; and if the authors of this midnight conspiracy were present, he demanded of them that they should now show cause for this unwarranted proceeding.

For a few moments there was silence; then one after another of the representatives of the various mines arose, and stated that similar notices had been posted at their mines also. They were ignorant as to the authors of these performances, and desired to be enlightened.

It soon began to be evident that no strike had been authorized by any considerable number of the miners present. Indeed, not one was found who attempted to justify the action that had been taken by parties as yet unknown, and who, if present, refused either to acknowledge or defend their action. In the discussion that followed, however, it appeared that quite a number were disposed to take advantage of present circumstances, and refuse to return to work until the desired advance in wages had been granted. Some others, who acquiesced in this conclusion, were undoubtedly influenced by their fear of the Molly Maguires.

After a vain attempt to induce the miners to agree to go to work the next day, Sandy Cameron declared that since the conference could give no explanation of the strange proceedings

of the night before, and would not justify them, it was folly to proclaim a strike now unless they meant to submit themselves altogether to the rule of irresponsible and invisible vagabonds, who lacked the courage to pursue honorable methods, and whom no honorable man could follow without shame. As for the Camerton men, he said, they now gave notice that they would not join a strike which a dark-lantern, cut-throat conspiracy tried to force upon them.

This deliverance was greeted with mingled cheers and hisses. The conference was hopelessly divided, and there seemed to be no prospect of a general agreement. The men who wanted to strike, and the men who were afraid to go to work, were in the majority. After the announcement of the Camerton men, the conference soon came to a close. The Camerton Slope would resume work as usual the next day; the other mines would be idle. One result of the conference was to create a gulf between the Camerton men and the others, and some sharp passages occurred between the two factions. Sandy's parting shot at the other side was:

"Gentlemen, you ought not to adjourn till you have passed a regular-built resolution, commending the eminent virtues of the dark-lantern, lawless, invisible creatures that you are going to follow for your captains."

A yell of defiance was the only answer to this sally, and, in the midst of no little confusion, the conference broke up without a formal adjournment.

The Camerton men were in a hopeless minority, and it was soon evident that they were not all persuaded that the course which they had taken was the best. At all events, scarcely more than half the men were on hand the next morning to begin the day's work.

Chapter XXIII.

SOME ACCOUNT OF THE MOLLIE MAGUIRES.

THE reader who is unfamiliar with the history and peculiar character of the Mollie Maguire movement in the coal regions of Pennsylvania, may find it difficult to appreciate the ferment produced in Camerton and the adjacent communities by the discovery of the existence of that order in their midst.

For some years the anthracite-coal regions, in the eastern part of the State, had been overrun and terrorized to a remarkable degree by this "midnight, dark-lantern, murderous fraternity," as it was aptly described in one of the processes at law. Thus far, however, the organization had not extended itself westward of the Alleghanies; and the people accounted themselves secure, until they were startled out of their comfortable illusion by the events narrated in the last chapter.

The society or order known as the "Mollie Maguires" had its origin in Ireland, and it appears to have grown out of a combined attempt on the part of certain tenants to resist the payment of rents. When the agents came around on their collecting tours, they were seized by the tenants, and beaten or ducked in the ponds, or stoned out of the neighborhood. As the men who perpetrated these indignities were dressed in women's clothes, they came to be called "The Mollies." They were also known as "Ribbonmen," "Ancient Order Men," and "Sleepers." Their identity with "The Ancient Order of Hibernians" has been repeatedly affirmed, and just as persistently denied; but there is evidence that prominent Mollie Maguires in this country were accustomed to speak of themselves and others of their number as "Ancients."

The organization seems to have crossed the ocean and established itself in this country in the few years immediately preceding the War of the Rebellion. It reached the zenith of its power and influence in the years immediately following the war; and in the districts subject to its baleful influence it was more to be dreaded than the Rebellion itself. Men were waylaid and killed at night, and even shot down in open daylight—sometimes on the public highway, sometimes while engaged in their duties at the

mines, and sometimes at their homes. These deeds of bloody violence were always done by *strangers*, who generally disappeared before they could be captured. After this fact was once established, strangers came to be looked upon very generally with suspicion. A group of two or three unknown men appearing on the street in any of the mining regions during this "reign of terror" were likely to be shunned, as being very probably Mollies out on some murderous expedition; and innocent people were often placed under arrest by the sorely puzzled officers of the law.

The chief objects of the vengeance of this death-dealing conspiracy were the superintendents and managers of collieries, police officers who were especially active in ferreting out these various crimes, and miners who refused to obey their behests in the matter of strikes and other features of their policy.*

* We append a few instances of the murderous work of this secret, oath-bound conspiracy of assassination: In the month of August, 1865, Mr. David Muhr, superintendent of a colliery, was killed in Foster Township, Schuylkill County, Pennsylvania. In January, 1866, Henry H. Dunne, a well-known mining superintendent of Pottsville, was killed in his carriage, on the turnpike, two miles from the city. In October, 1868, Alexander Rae, a mining superintendent, was killed near Centralia, in Columbia County. March, 1869, Wm. H. Littlehales, superintendent of the Glen Carbon Coal Company, Schuylkill County, met the

The difficulty in bringing the perpetrators of these crimes to justice lay in the fact that the secret work of the organization embarrassed every step of the proceedings, so that ordinary methods utterly failed to reach and convict the guilty parties. Mollie Maguires appeared on the witness-stand in every trial, and sat on the juries that tried their partners in crime, while the well-founded fear of assassination led the witnesses of some of the boldest murders to flee from the neighborhood, or suffer imprisonment for contempt, rather than give evidence in a court of justice. But the favorite method of defense employed by the Mollies, and one that for a long time seemed to be all-sufficient, was the *alibi*. The murders, as we have stated, were always committed by strangers. If afterwards the guilty parties were arrested and brought to trial, the Brotherhood would furnish any number of men to swear that the accused parties were personally known to them, and that they were in some other place at the time of the murder, and could not therefore be the perpetrators of the crime.

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same fate. In December, 1871, Morgan Powell, assistant superintendent of the Lehigh and Wilkesbarre Coal and Iron Company, in Carbon County, was put to death. Also, F. W. S. Langdon, Geo. K. Smith, and Graham Powell, all managers or bosses, in the same county. It would be easy to extend the list of victims.

It is in evidence, also, since this strange epidemic of lawlessness was suppressed, that it had in view other and more ambitious projects than merely influencing wages, or the "removal" of objectionable bosses. Its heavy hand was felt in political affairs, and it began to be a controlling force in the elections for filling county and State offices. Not only miners but reputable citizens of the highest standing received communications signed only with the skull and cross-bones—the sign-manual of the organization—admonishing them to change their political course, or to cease their opposition to certain candidates. So far-reaching was this terrorism that men in no way connected with the organization, or even with the business of mining, voted openly what was known as the "Mollie Maguire Ticket," though it was repugnant to their convictions and sentiments.

By a system of signs and passwords, it was possible for the Mollies to recognize each other in any community, and even in the darkest night. These signs and words were known as "the goods," and were changed every three months. "The goods" came from Ireland by special messengers, and were sent to all the lodges by other messengers. These important secrets were never intrusted to the mails.

The head of each local subdivision, or chap-

ter, was styled the "bodymaster," one of whose duties it was to open each meeting of the lodge with *prayer*—a ritual service being employed for the purpose. As a specimen of the methods of recognition employed by the Mollies for use among strangers, we give "the goods" for one quarter:

Challenge. Put tip of little finger of right hand to outer corner of right eye.

Answer. Catch right lapel of vest with little finger and thumb of right hand.

Night challenge. "The nights are very dark."

Answer. "I hope they soon will mend."

Quarreling toast. "Your temper is high."

Answer. "I have good reason."

Whenever it was determined to put some boss or superintendent, or other objectionable person, out of the way, the bodymaster of the lodge which had passed the sentence of death would call upon the bodymaster of some lodge more or less distant from that community for a detail of men to do "a clane job." The lodge thus called on was bound to honor the call, and always decided by lot who should do the bloody deed. The men thus selected proceeded to the neighborhood indicated; and, when the intended victim had been pointed out to them, they sometimes "shadowed" him for several days before an opportunity occurred to strike the fatal blow.

The miners outside of the Brotherhood, and particularly those suspected of being antagonistic to it, were called "Modocs." How many of these Modocs paid with their lives the penalty of having incurred the enmity of the Mollies can never be known. Upon the disappearance of a Modoc, a report frequently found its way into circulation that he had gone to visit his friends, or had gotten work at some other colliery. There was, however, sometimes positive knowledge that a murder had been committed; and any sort of a report to the contrary, though circulated with the usual industry, failed to satisfy the public or to silence investigation.

Bad as the organization was in its spirit and aims, and stained with the blood of innocent and worthy men, it seemed unnecessary to paint it in blacker hues than its history would warrant; but many of the stories concerning it which had reached Camerton and vicinity were wild and terrifying exaggerations. It was declared that the leaders of the Mollie Maguires were evil spirits in human shape, and that the men who joined them thereby sold themselves to Satan, and could never again recover their freedom. It was said to be useless to attempt to escape the vengeance of the Brotherhood when once its enmity had been incurred,—it

had supernatural knowledge; it would pursue its victims to the ends of the earth; it had power, also, to "put a spell" upon people. It was dangerous to speak a word against it to a confidential friend, or even to *think* in opposition to it. It had power—so some people claimed—to discover all such secrets, and would punish its enemies by methods peculiarly its own.

If the fact has not already appeared in these pages, it may be well now to state that some of the mining villages were disposed to indulge a feeling of jealousy toward Camerton. This was especially marked in the attitude of the Hawksville people. As Hawksville had the prominence which belongs to a religious center, so Camerton might be called the intellectual center of the cluster of mining communities which had taken part in the Big Meadow Conference. Camerton was a more distinctively American community than any of the others. While it had the same mixture of foreign elements to be found everywhere in the mining regions, yet the English-speaking people largely outnumbered the others, and the influence of American modes of life was strongly marked. Camerton in general represented a higher order of social life; the homes were cleaner and better kept. It was said that the Camerton people, both men and women, could be picked out in any of the

great holiday gatherings by their better appearance; they were better and more becomingly dressed, and, in general, quieter and better-behaved.

These characteristics of the Camertonians did not, however, contribute to their popularity with the people of the other villages. They were looked upon as a kind of self-constituted aristocracy, altogether "too proud and stuck-up."

And now the breach seemed to widen. The Camerton miners had refused to join the strike, and had even gone so far as to fling down the gage of battle to the terrible Mollie Maguire Brotherhood!

What would come of all this?

A great many of the miners of the several communities found themselves sorely perplexed by the turn of events. They were quite willing to see the Camerton men humiliated and punished; but, on the other hand, there was a very general feeling that the methods employed in introducing the strike were far from being the best, and ought to be frowned upon and disowned. The Camerton men would have had a following in resisting those methods had it not been for the deep-seated fear of the secret Brotherhood; and that fear seemed to have the widest sway among the lowest classes of the people—those most inclined to superstition.

Chapter XXIV.

THE LEADERS OF THE OPPOSITION.

WHEN the Camerton men returned home that evening, after the Big Meadow conference, their report of what had taken place did not tend in the least to quiet the agitation that had existed all day on account of the blockade of the mine and the threatening notices. The women in general, and the old men who were too feeble to walk to the place of the conference, had done scarcely anything the livelong day but meet together in groups to discuss the situation and calculate the probabilities of a strike. When it was generally known that the miners had disagreed, and that even the Camerton men were divided among themselves as to the best course to pursue, the friends of the party that had decided to oppose the strike by continuing work were filled with alarm.

Sandy Cameron's wife begged him not to ex-

pose himself to the danger, which there was too good reason to apprehend at the hands of the unscrupulous men who had precipitated the strike. Mrs. Cameron was a tall, angular woman in person, thoroughly Scotch in feature and manner, as well as in her style of conversation, with a full share of that native shrewdness and vigorous quality of utterance, so often found among the industrious and frugal Scottish women.

"Surely, Sandy," she said, "there 's danger eneugh i' th' mines o' themselves; and now that ye ha' escaped ha'ing your bones broken, or the life crushed out o' ye a' these years, why should ye in your old age invite the kind o' death that these murdersome villains will deal out to ye, if a' that 's said aboot them 's true?"

"Hey, woman, gi'e yoursel' ease, and dinna fash your head wi' a' these foolish fears." (Sandy always used his Scotch dialect with greater freedom in his own house, and among his own country people.) "The creaturs that do such works as ha' been done hereaboots i' th' night are not to be greatly dreaded by true men wha keep their e'en open."

"There 's nae security for true men ony mair than for ithers, at the hands o' wretches ye 're sae fond o' styling 'dark-lantern cut-throats.' It 's the true men they 'll be lying in wait for."

"It 's scarce worth the while o' wasting

words aboot it," replied Sandy. "I ha'e lived in the fear o' God and in the respect o' the best part o' my fellow-men ever sin' I came into these parts. There's nane will say na to that; yet mair than ance I ha'e been on the unpopular side o' these disturbing questions, and ha'e had hisses and reproaches flung in my very teeth by men crazed wi' drink and bent on brewing mischief, and mair than ane o' these same men has afterwards admitted himsel' i' th' wrang, and asked my forgiveness. Na, na, Margaret; it'll not do for true men to be showing the white feather now."

The wife was greatly distressed at Sandy's determination to go to work, since she felt that it was scarcely less than going straight to his own death; and so she could not quit the subject, though she was well aware that any attempt to divert him from a purpose once fixed in his own mind must, in all probability, prove unavailing. But she dropped the argumentative style of appeal, and in softened tones said, as her tears began to fall:

"Sandy, we ha'e lived together these a'most forty years, and we ha'e been happy wi' ane anither and the children that God has given us. I ha'e never tried to control your way o' life in general, as ye well know. I ha'e been content to be a keeper at hame, and let ye be master o' your ain conduct; and I ha'e been proud o' ye

for not bein' like sa mony o' the men aboot us that ha'e nae character, and waste their lives wi' drink and brawlin'; but I 'm thinking, I may say, wi'out self-glorying, that I ha'e fairly airned the right to make a request o' ye noo an' then, that ye 'll heed for my sake."

"Ye 're putting it ower strong, Margaret," replied Sandy, as he moved uneasily in his chair, under the power of his wife's appeal. "If I had played the part of a coward ten years agone i' th' troublous times we had then, would ye ha' had the same occasion to be proud o' me, as ye say, for being different fra' some o' the men aboot us? Ye know well, Margaret, that I ha' set my face like a flint against strikes, and a' attempts to settle differences atween man and master by brute force, that just as like can be settled in a more reasonable way. Are ye asking me now in a'most the end o' my days to gi'e up my principles?"

"I 'm asking ye to gi'e up nathing that it 's your duty to maintain. In the time that ye 're speaking of the case was different, and ye war a younger man. There 's na occasion, wi' sa mony strong, lusty men aboot Camerton who hold wi' ye in this matter, that they should go into hiding till ye ha' fought their battle, an' made it safe for them to go to work. That kind o' service canna be expected o' a man o' your years."

"What you ha' said aboot my years, Margaret, is the very reason why I should continue to stand by my principles to the end. I couldna respect mysel', and life would be a burden, wi' the recollection that I had gone down on my knees to the miserable creatures that ha' taken it upon themselves to issue their orders to us a' as if we were nathing mair than their ain whipped puppies."

It was at the supper table, in the room which served the Camerons as dining-room and kitchen, that this conversation had taken place on the evening after the conference. It was a long, rather narrow room, partly excavated out of the hillside at the rear of the house, so that one could easily step from the ground upon the shed-roof at its lowest point. There was a door and a full-sized window at each end of the hall-like room, as well as two smaller windows up close against the ceiling, in the rear.

What further conversation might have taken place between Sandy and his wife was interrupted by the sound of footsteps coming up the walk and approaching the dining-room entrance. It was James Shryock and George Atkins, who, in another moment, appeared in the doorway.

"Come in, gentlemen, come in," said Sandy, as he rose and handed chairs to his visitors; and, pointing to the table, which still contained a

bountiful supply of food, he asked, "Ha' ye been to supper?"

"Yes, thanks," replied Shryock, as he and Atkins seated themselves. "We came home with good appetites from our afternoon's exercise in the open air, and I'll venture to say—speaking for George as well as myself—that we have both done ourselves full justice."

"Yes, we got good appetites out of that conference, and that's about all we did get," put in Atkins with a forced laugh, in which the others joined. "It was a conference to be remembered," he resumed. "I think, Sandy, that I shall never forget your challenge to the dark-lantern conspirators to appear and acknowledge their work."

"True enough," remarked Shryock; "the old veteran's tones had thunder in them. It sounded almost like Gabriel calling the dead to come forth."

"It's to be hoped, though," replied Sandy, "that Gabriel will have better success than I did."

"Nae doubt aboot that; he'll ha' higher authority and stronger forces to back him than you 've got," suggested Sandy's wife.

"We dropped in," said Shryock, "to ha' a bit crack wi' ye wi'out the embarrassment o' ha'ing people aboot us who are only ta'in notes

o' things and are not o' our school o' politics i' this matter."

Shryock was himself a Scotchman by birth, but had left his native land in childhood; and besides a quite perceptible "burr," there was very little to distinguish his speech from that of a native American, only when, as on this occasion, he dropped into a playful mood in the presence of other Scotch people.

These three men of all others—and they well knew it—had occasion now to be careful at every step of their proceedings. Circumstances, without any seeking on their part, had thrust them into a kind of leadership of the opposition to the Mollie Maguire tyranny. They had openly spoken their minds that morning about the high-handed attempt to force a strike upon the miners by methods hitherto unknown in that part of the country; they had said to their fellow-miners that such foreign growths had better be nipped in the bud; and, in the conference that afternoon, they had worked hard to brace up and consolidate the opposition to a strike ordered by men who were still unknown.

"I'm fearing you three 'll get yourselves into a trouble there 'll be na getting out o' wi' whole bones," said Mrs. Cameron.

"That 's what all the women seem to think," replied Atkins. "But you must n't forget, Mrs.

Cameron, that we did n't begin this trouble. It 's the doings of others that has stirred up the mischief, and we 've got it to deal with. A strike now will take the bread out of our mouths for a good bit to come. And suppose it should turn out," he continued, as a new thought seemed to strike him—"suppose it should turn out that the men who did this thing are not responsible? Perhaps they are not even members of this miserable Brotherhood; perhaps they 're nothing more than funny fellows putting up a trick on us to scare us. And you know, Mrs. Cameron, that nobody would make more fun of us than our own wives, if it should turn out that way. Anyhow, we 'll find out sooner who the villains are by going on with the work."

"Ay, ay, Mr. Atkins! Ye 're overly clever at making excuse for rushing into danger; but I 'm thinking it 's not the business o' the men to find out who 's at the bottom o' this interference wi' the work. It 's the company's place to take care o' their own property and find out who it is that fences up their mines. I was saying to my auld man before ye came in that there 's surely danger eneugh i' mining o' itself wi'out ha'ing honest men exposed to death for being willing to work for a lawful wage. Let the company, I say, and th' officers o' th' law deal wi' this matter, and not the men!"

Mrs. Cameron now began to clear away the table, and the men went on with their consultation as to the best methods of procedure to protect themselves and to render the strike abortive. It was learned that Mr. Morgan, the superintendent, who had been absent from home for several days, had returned, and that he and Mr. Harris were arranging for a close watch during the night, so that any prowlers about the Slope were not likely to go undetected.

The three men thus associated in the purpose to resist to the last extremity the Mollie Maguire dictatorship which had suddenly challenged their obedience, were fully sensible of the difficulties and dangers of the task they had undertaken; but they determined to go forward with a bold front, keeping a sharp lookout on every hand for any clue which might lead to a discovery of the gang who had done the bold work of the night before. They believed that if they could locate these parties and bring them to justice, Mollie Maguirism would be discouraged at the outset.

They wrote a letter to Father Rafferty, reciting what had taken place thus far, and stating there was good reason to believe that the men who sought to introduce and establish the unlawful Brotherhood in that community were members of "the big Church." He would have

more influence over them than any other man or combination of men, and they appealed to him to aid them and all other good citizens in the adoption of vigorous measures for the suppression of the evil at the very beginning.

"Ye 'd better not stay out too late, and we must all be careful and not go about too much after dark," remarked Sandy, as they parted for the night.

There was great curiosity, next morning, to see how many of the men, and what particular ones, would go to work. It seemed that all the miners and other employees were congregated about the mouth of the slope at the usual time for commencing work, but it was evident that many of them were there simply as spectators. They had their evening clothes on, and did not mean to go to work. Some visitors were there also from the neighboring mines, anxious to see whether any considerable number of the men would finally venture to go to work. Earnest discussion was going forward on all sides between the two opposing parties, and not altogether without results; for several of the men who had come to begin work, were led by the arguments of the other side to change their minds and join the strikers. But this breach was abundantly repaired by the working party, who persuaded more than an equal number of

their "dressed-up" comrades to return for their working-clothes, and take a hand in the battle for manly independence.

When these returned, all equipped for work, it was something past the usual time for beginning the day's labor; but much was gained by the delay. As the new recruits for the working party came in sight, all in a body, they were greeted with hisses by several of the strikers; but this demonstration was quickly drowned by a rousing cheer from the other side, and before this burst of enthusiasm died out, the lamps were lighted, and the men began their march down the slope at a lively gait, hurrahing as they went; while, at the same moment, the engineer took part in the cheering with prolonged and successive blasts of his steam-whistle. He contrived also to add something to the already deafening sounds by opening the mud-valve of the boilers. The earth fairly shook under this terrific roar; and the loiterers about the slope, unable to "hear their own ears," found it impossible to indulge in any comments, or to make their demonstration of disapproval effectual.

With evident disappointment and chagrin in their looks and manner, the crowd gradually melted away, and presently the day's output of coal began as if nothing unusual had taken place.

Chapter XXV.

A DISCOVERY IN THE WEST ENTRY.

ONE of the incidents outside the mine that morning was the appearance of Pat McCoy among the working party, with his mining clothes on, and apparently quite determined in his purpose to oppose the strike. He was at once surrounded by a number of his associates, who expressed great surprise at his attitude, and labored hard to dissuade him from going to work. He turned a deaf ear, however, to all their arguments, and employed his sharp tongue with great freedom in belaboring the men who were scheming for a strike, and also those who had allowed themselves to be bullied into supporting it against their will.

"Born tired; that's what's the matter wid yez," said Pat, addressing himself to the latter class. "If it's a rest yer afther wanting, why don't yez take it like men? Go home," he

added, waving his hand in a disdainful manner, "go home, ivery mother's son o' ye, go home and go to bed; send for the doctor to come and feel yer pulse, an' give ye something to physic the laziness out o' ye. That wud be better nor raising a row to shtop men that are afther working while they can get it to do."

Against the men who had projected the strike and barricaded the mine he hurled a copious variety of coarse and profane epithets, and wound up by declaring that he would rather help to hang them to a sour apple-tree than to eat his dinner.

Pat's attitude on this occasion, and in particular his violent language toward men who were well known to be his own particular cronies, was a surprise to every one present.

The day wore away without any occurrence calculated to excite apprehension. Archie Atkins was transferred from the south entry to the west entry, the reason being that none of the drivers of the west entry had reported for duty, while, with a single exception, all the drivers of the south entry were on hand.

Numerous precautions were taken that night by the managers to guard against any injury to the mine or the machinery, which should interfere with the work the next day. A strong guard was stationed in and around the engine-

house; the slope was illuminated from the mouth to the lye at the bottom, so that no opportunity should be afforded, under cover of darkness, for cutting the rope, tearing up the track, knocking out the timbers which supported the roof, or any other species of destructive vandalism. The dump-house, the weigh-office, the stable, and, in short, all the property of the company were watched in the same way.

Archie entered on his work in the west entry with great reluctance, for various reasons. To begin with, the route was a difficult one, and he was altogether unacquainted with it. It was new also to his horse, and this was no small consideration. There was only one other driver in the entry with him, and he also had been transferred from another part of the mine, and knew no more than Archie about the west entry. It was fortunate for the two drivers that there were but few men at work in that entry, so that they had time to go cautiously, and thus learn, by degrees, where the grades and rough places in the route were.

Archie's chief objection to the change was, however, that he was separated from his particular friends just at the time of greatest danger. The drivers, as well as the miners, knew that by going to work they had aroused the angry resentment of a body of men who would not be at all

scrupulous as to the methods employed for the embarrassment of the working party. It was useless to hope that the miners and drivers now at work would be suffered to go unmolested. A blow would be struck sooner or later; but whether inside the mine, or outside, no one could tell. Archie was as determined as any one else in his opposition to the strike; but he preferred to be on his own familiar ground in this emergency, and among his own tried friends.

His fellow-driver, Joe Cox, proved to be quite companionable, and readily followed Archie's suggestions. It was, of course, his duty to do this, as Archie had been appointed turnkeeper for that entry by Mr. Harris.

It was quite gratifying to the two drivers, when they took their horses to the stable in the evening, to realize that they had gotten through the day without accident, and that they had not been molested by evil-minded persons, who might easily have lain in wait for them in the many dark crannies and hiding-places which the entry afforded. Their several trips that day served also to make them somewhat familiar with the route, so that they had less apprehension on this account as they looked forward to the days to come.

There was no increase in the number of the working party the next day, as some of them had hoped and predicted. It seemed that the

causes which had operated to lead the strikers to take the course they did at the beginning, were not removed by the fact that a part of the men in only one of the mines had seen fit to go to work, while all the other mines were idle. Those of the idle men who wanted to work were still afraid to do so.

There were not enough men in the west entry to keep the two drivers constantly busy; and on the afternoon of the second day, while waiting for his last trip of cars to be loaded—a wait that promised to be a matter of an hour or more—Archie concluded to spend a little time in exploring the old, worked-out, abandoned section of the entry. It was the oldest entry in the mine, and a great many of the inner rooms had been driven to the boundary-line of the company's property. The track had then been taken up, and in some of these old chambers the pillars had undergone "a squeeze;" the props had rotted, and the roof had fallen to such a height as to make it both difficult and dangerous to pass through them over the numerous falls. Archie had always delighted, however, in rambling through such places. He found himself wondering who had worked in this room, who had driven that cross-cut, and whether a certain large fall of roof, which had evidently occurred in the time when the room

was working, had injured or killed anybody; and how many years it could have been since all this region, where a death-like stillness now reigned, had been alive with the sights and sounds of bustling activity which distinguish the working parts of a mine.

While busy with these thoughts, and wandering about in an aimless sort of way, yet interested in all he saw, Archie had the misfortune to drop his lamp, which he was carrying in his hand. It went out instantly, leaving him in total darkness. It may well be believed that Archie was startled, as he suddenly recalled the fact that he had no matches with him. He had unthoughtedly taken off his jacket, with his oil-flask in one pocket and his steel match-box in the other, and left it behind when he started on his ramble.

"I deserve all this—every bit of it," he said to himself, with the emphasis of vexation and dismay. "What a dumb trick it was, to come into such a place as this without any matches!"

This reflection, however just in itself, was not particularly reassuring, and in nowise calculated to help him out of his dilemma; and it was succeeded by a host of disagreeable visions of what might possibly happen to him before he could find his way out of there. He had, of course, a good general idea of the way he had

come, and would have no difficulty in returning if he could only get his lamp lighted; but to undertake such a journey in the dark was quite appalling.

The chief difficulty in finding one's way about in abandoned workings is in the piles of fallen roof that sometimes almost completely barricade the way, leaving scarcely the smallest crevice through which one might crawl. Then, too, huge masses of loosened roof, just ready to fall, and leaning only upon squeezed pillars and rotten props, are easily started into action. Sometimes—as in the case of an Alpine avalanche—the jar of a footfall or the touch of a hand will precipitate the catastrophe. Archie knew all this very well. He was aware that, in undertaking to "feel his way" back, he would be most certain to wander into dangerous localities, which he would not venture to pass through even with a light; yet it was evident that there was nothing else for him to do but to make his way back, as best he could, by the sense of feeling.

He dropped on his knees for a few moments, and audibly prayed for God to help him. This mishap in the old diggings brought very vividly to his mind the experience of himself and fellow-prisoners at the time of the flood. But *then* the fearful situation was relieved in a measure by

human companionship; *now* he was all alone. It was a great comfort to him to realize that God could hear his cry for help, even in such a place as that. God had heard him before in a situation of even greater peril. Rising to his feet again, he took time to recollect the course he had followed in reaching the place where he now was, and determined as far as possible to retrace his steps over the same route.

This, however, was easier said than done; and he had not gone far until he was forced to admit that he had missed the way. Where he expected to find a cross-cut, he met a solid wall. Great lumps of fallen roof, piled up on one another, intercepted his progress where he thought he ought to find a clear passage-way; and it seemed impossible to discover a tunnel big enough for him to crawl through so as to get over the top of the fall. He was compelled to retrace his steps to the next cross-cut, and feel his way down another room. Once he tripped and fell heavily against a prop, which gave way under the force of the blow. The cap-piece fell on him, and a shower of broken bits of roof rained all about him. He was but slightly hurt, however, and was soon up and at it again. After scrambling over a number of falls, large and small, he seemed to reach a locality where the timbers and roof were in

better condition; and he was able to keep straight forward in the same room until he reached the main entry.

He knew where he was now beyond any question, and had only to follow the entry straight out to the working part of it. There were no great obstacles in his path—here a pile of dirt, an old cross-tie, or a broken rail; there a lump or two of roof-coal, or a puddle of water occasioned by the stoppage of the ditch. It was easy to tell by the sound of his footsteps when he passed the mouth of a room on his right, or a slant or cross-cut on his left. After passing two of the old rooms, and just as he reached the mouth of the third one, his attention was suddenly attracted by the faint glimmer of a light a long distance up the room.

Archie waited a moment to try to discover whether the light was advancing toward him, or going in the other direction. The distance was still considerable to where he had left his coat and matches, and it would be better to get his lamp lit here if the person was coming his way. But, so far as Archie could make out, the light seemed to be motionless; and he started toward it, wondering who the person might be, and what business could possibly be detaining him in such a place as that just at the hour for quitting work. He had not proceeded far up

the room, however, before a feeling akin to fear took possession of him—a kind of superstitious dread—which checked his advance and half decided him to turn back. It occurred to him all at once that a stationary light in an old abandoned part of the mine at so late an hour was rather a difficult thing to explain. Then he tried to laugh at his own fears, and said to himself that his recent adventure in those old workings must have unstrung his nerves; and so he determined to advance, but to do so as quietly as possible, that he might discover who was there before he himself should be detected.

So stealthily did he now creep along that his footsteps were scarcely audible to himself. A few moments more, and he could make out the figures of several men, who seemed to be sitting in a circle on the ground, while one solitary lamp hung upon a prop above their heads. Even this one lamp was turned low, and gave a very feeble light.

ARCHIE IN THE OLD MINE.

Chapter XXVI.

THE SESSION OF THE INNER COUNCIL.

ANOTHER cautious step or two revealed the fact that the men were not sitting but kneeling, and that one of them was speaking in a low tone, or rather, he seemed to be reading something out of a little book. Archie found himself almost petrified with amazement at the scene before him. What could it mean? Who were those men, and what were they doing? He could now make out that the men were five in number, but why were all the lights put out except one—and that one suffered to burn only in so dim and doubtful a manner?

Archie's first thought, as he took in the number of men and their kneeling posture, was that he had stumbled upon a little prayer-meeting; such a thing was not wholly unknown in the Camerton mine. But this suggestion was quickly dismissed, for in the next moment he was able to

make out the face of the speaker, or reader, with tolerable certainty. It was Pat McCoy! Pat was not known as a praying man, nor was there in the group around him a single man who was accustomed to attend any sort of a prayer-meeting. It was not a prayer-meeting, that was certain; but what was it?

Determined to get near enough to find out what was going on, and yet fearful that he might stumble, and thus betray his presence, Archie now got down on all fours, and, noiselessly as a cat, he crept as near to the group as he could dare to venture without being discovered. A belt of shadow cast by a prop, which intercepted the rays of the lamp, enabled him to find a hiding place nearer than he could otherwise have gone, and he could now see and hear all that took place. It was a weird scene—almost awe-inspiring—and Archie began to find himself, in some degree, fascinated by it. His sense of fear was almost wholly absorbed in an intense curiosity to see what would take place after this remarkable prelude. His thoughts came fast, and produced the effect of deep conviction—he had by the merest accident stumbled upon a nest of Mollie Maguires!

It was evident that Pat McCoy was the head (bodymaster) of the lodge. He was a man well fitted for such a position. Shrewd and capable

above the average of his fellow-workmen, a man of convivial habits, and oftentimes in a state of beastly intoxication, yet he had a reserve of manner upon occasions that was in marked contrast with the garrulous frankness of most of his countrymen. He had a power of speech and a power of silence not often united in the same person. It was this latter characteristic, perhaps, as much as what he said on other occasions, that gave him the reputation among his associates of being "a deep man." There were times when Pat McCoy would not talk. Even amid the uproar and varied excitements of Barney Dillon's place, he would sit moody and abstracted, drinking huge quantities of liquor, but refusing to take part in any game, and answering his companions only in monosyllables. He could be, and sometimes was, "the life of the party;" but his ascendency was that of the oracle rather than the wit or retailer of jokes. He was known also to entertain advanced and radical notions upon some subjects which are now embraced under the head of "sociological questions," and frequently spoke with great bitterness, and sometimes with a fierce and wild eloquence, of an approaching change, a swift-coming day when coal companies, land-owners, and bosses should take their turn at labor and subordination; they should, in fact, be the slaves of the now working-class.

One of the problems of the day before was solved. It was clear to Archie, now, why Pat McCoy and several of his fellow Mollies, were found among the working party; they were there as spies, and also that they might avert suspicion from themselves while plotting to make the strike effectual.

Archie's heart beat fast; indeed, he could scarcely contain himself, as the fact dawned upon him that he was now within the inner circle of the Mollie Maguire organization—an unobserved observer of their most secret deliberations! What possibilities might not now be afforded him of frustrating these evil-minded men, and even bringing them to justice! He knew all of the men in that group, and recalled the fact that every one of them was under suspicion as a Mollie Maguire.

It was a startling revelation to Archie, that such men should open their council of violence and blood with a form of prayer. Later on, however, it became known that this was their invariable rule. Pat McCoy, as bodymaster, was also priest of the lodge.

After the prayer was ended, the men changed from a kneeling to a sitting posture, and the real business promptly began. The council could not last long without exciting suspicion by the absence of the men. Somebody must be made an

example of; somebody must suffer the vengeance of the Brotherhood without farther delay; somebody must pay the penalty of ignorance or audacity in defying the will of the Ancients, after their purpose had been made known so fully and emphatically. This was the deliverance of the bodymaster in opening the business of the council; and to it all the party assented by an expressive nod of the head, though none of the others spoke a word. A few drops of blood now, the bodymaster suggested, might prevent the shedding of oceans of it later on.

The next question was as to the victims—how many, and who should they be? Then the other men began to take part in the discussion, and the names of the superintendent and mining-boss were at once suggested. It was said to be needful, also, to put the mark of their displeasure on the men—and Archie's heart beat faster as he heard the names of his father, Sandy Cameron, and James Shryock mentioned.

"Get them three out uv the way wance, an' there 'll be no more sich triflin' wid us," remarked one of the men, who gave emphasis to his words by several expressive nods of his head.

"Five is too many to kill at wan an' the same time," pronounced the bodymaster in his most deliberate and decisive manner.

"It 's not all that 's guilty," replied the other.

"Ye 're right enough there," was the body-master's answer; "but five men is neither the wan thing nor the other. If we 're to make away wid all that 's guilty, five is n't enough; but if we 're jist a-goin' to give all hands a caution, I 'm thinking that wan uv the bosses an' wan uv the men is enough."

Mr. Harris had shown such determination in opposing the strike that he was at once marked as the victim to serve for a warning to the management. It took a little longer time to select the victim among the miners. Sandy Cameron was well known as the principal leader of the opposition to the strike, with James Shryock and George Atkins for his chief lieutenants; but several of the men were opposed to taking the life of Sandy Cameron.

"We 'd better put a dozen o' the other fellows out o' the way than touch Sandy," pleaded one of the councilors; "it would n't make nigh as big a disturbance."

The bodymaster listened to the various opinions, and then said:

"I 'd be willing to take any wan o' the three, especially George Atkins. I have a grudge ag'in' him and his brat, and as sure as my name 's Pat McCoy, I 'll be getting even wid

them wan uv these days; but it 's my judgment that Sandy Cameron is our man this time. Ye 'll not put down this rebellion against our ancient order till ye put *him* down—mind that!"

It was thus settled that Mr. Harris, the mining-boss, and Sandy Cameron were to be the first victims of the vengeance of the Mollie Maguires in Camerton. The bodymaster was to call upon another lodge for a detail of men to do the bloody deed; and this matter settled, the session of the council was concluded with formal ritual services, which consisted chiefly of a solemn adjuration to each of the men, and to which each in turn assented, with one hand uplifted and the other upon his heart, while he invoked upon himself the most direful curses if he revealed to any human being—wife, child, or friend—aught of what had occurred in the council.

It was time now for Archie to think about getting out of the way. It had occurred to him that there would be a moment or two in which the men would be occupied in lighting their lamps, and that under cover of the slight confusion and delay thus occasioned, he would be able to put a safe distance between himself and them. Nor did he miscalculate in this. The lamps were lighted one at a time, and

each man departed by himself, and was well out of sight before the next one lit his lamp. Each man also took a route different from the others—the first one going up the room and turning outward through one of the upper cross-cuts, the next man turning down toward the entry in the direction that Archie was going.

This compelled Archie to take advantage of the first cross-cut which he reached to turn aside, and let the man pass him. This done, he lost no time in making his way out to where he had left his coat and matches. After lighting his lamp, he soon had his trip of cars made up, and then started out the entry. He had not gone far before he overtook two of the men who had been in the council, and, slackening his speed, he invited them to ride. This offer was at once accepted, and they took their places on the bumper of the rear car, while Archie rode between the bumpers of the two forward cars. He chatted pleasantly with them, as opportunity occurred, during the trip to the lye at the bottom of the slope.

Little did they dream that he was in possession of their secret; and indeed, at times, it seemed to him that he could scarcely believe it himself. More than once he asked himself whether he had not been in dreamland for the

last hour and a half. His mishap in losing his light, and subsequent groping about in the rooms and cross-cuts and over the falls of the old workings; and his discovery of the five men—who seemed rather like five specters kneeling upon the ground—with all that they had said and done,—seemed to him in the retrospect so unnatural, so unreal, so very like the things he had read in fairy tales, that he could scarcely credit his own senses.

He was a little late in getting out with his trip, but not sufficiently so to make any explanation necessary. To no one could this be a matter of suspicion, unless to the five men of the council, and they were themselves late, and seemed to be gratified to find that they were not the last persons to quit work and leave the entry for the evening.

On reaching home, Archie found that his father had gotten home early, and, after washing and changing his clothes, had gone out, expecting to be home in time for supper. Archie and his mother delayed supper for a while, but as he did not come, they sat down to the table alone. Archie could not quite make up his mind whether to tell his mother of the event of the afternoon or not. He at last decided, however, that the knowledge of what had occurred would only fill her with alarm, and could

not in any event do her any good; but his father must know it as soon as possible.

It would be interesting, though, for his mother to know something of his adventure in the old workings; and he was just about to begin his narration when the thought suddenly occurred to him that he must not mention anything about this part of the story either—his mother might repeat it. What reason could he give her for not doing so, without telling her all the rest? If she mentioned the fact, even to a neighbor, that Archie had been compelled to find his way out of the old workings of the west entry in the dark, the members of the council would hear of it, and would know at once that he must have been in their vicinity. No, this part of the story—good a joke as it was upon himself—must be suppressed also.

He entertained his mother with an account of the more trivial happenings of the day; and as soon as the meal was ended, started out in search of his father.

Chapter XXVII.

THE YOUNG DETECTIVES.

IT is now time to make some mention of an amateur detective association, composed of young miners and drivers, which had been formed on the evening after the Big Meadow conference.

The idea originated with Silas Coleman, and was at once seized upon by the boys to whom he suggested it. Silas was not now a driver, but a regular miner in the south entry. He had served as a driver in that entry for a longer term than any of the present force of drivers; and, though he was no longer one of them, he was still much in their company, and was looked up to as a sort of past-master in the art of underground driving.

It was as they were walking home from the conference on the evening referred to, that Silas opened the subject to his associates by saying—

after looking sharply around to see who might be within hearing distance:

"Boys, times is goin' to be bilious hereabouts; an' if we don't keep our eyes peeled, some of us are a-goin' to get hurt."

"That's a fact," replied Sam Smallwood; "I was just thinkin' the same thing myself. I don't want to be hurt," he added, "but I ain't a-goin' to get down on my knees to these Mollies. *That* much is settled with *me*."

"And so it is with *me!*" put in several others, with more or less of emphasis. Then followed a pause, every one seeming to be occupied with his own thoughts.

"By the way you spoke a little while ago," said Archie, turning to Silas, "I thought you had something to tell us about the way to keep from getting hurt."

"P'r'aps I'll think o' some way an' let you all know about it later."

This was said in a rather evasive manner, as if he did not wish to pursue the subject any further just then. They had now arrived at the edge of Camerton; and one and another went his separate way, until Silas, Mac, and Archie were all that remained of the party.

"After we get our suppers, boys," said Silas, "let's meet on the hill back o' the company's store an' talk about this thing."

"Agreed," was the ready response of the other two.

"Tell Sam Smallwood," continued Silas, "but don't mention it to another soul."

The company's store was the principal store in Camerton. It stood off to itself, on the moderately sloping ground between the mouth of the slope and the main street of the village. The open space that surrounded it on all sides had originally been reserved by the company for its machine-shops and other buildings, which were afterwards located elsewhere—much to the gratification of the villagers, who by degrees began to utilize the inviting grounds in the vicinity of the store as a sort of public park. It was the nearest approach to a green and shady resort of which Camerton could boast. It had the merit of being central and easy of access; and on summer evenings the scene was usually very animated, as scores of people lolled upon the grass, pleasantly chatting, or filling the air with snatches of song and bursts of laughter.

The boys were not long in getting their suppers and making their way to the favorite spot, where already many a group of excited people had gathered to discuss the events of the afternoon.

"Silas, why could n't you say what you had

to say when I asked you about it on the way home?" inquired Archie, as the party of four settled themselves in a clear space remote from the crowd, where they might talk without being overheard.

"Because," replied Silas, "I did n't care for Joe Pitzer and Tom Coggins, and them other fellows to hear what I 've got to say."

"Why, they 're all right," suggested Mac.

"They 're well-meanin' enough, of course," answered Silas; "but they ain't the stuff for detectives—Tom Coggins especially; he talks too much with his mouth."

"Who wants to make detectives out of 'em?" inquired Sam Smallwood.

"Nobody that 's got any sense," retorted Silas. "What I 'm after," he continued, "is for us four to tackle the job o' huntin' down these Mollie Maguires, an' ferretin' out what they 're up to."

"That 's a big job," said Archie, as he looked into the faces of the rest.

"It 's a heap too big a job for us," suggested Sam.

"No, it is n't" persisted Silas; "we can do it if we only think we can.

"I do n't know anything about detective business," said Archie, in a rather rueful tone.

"You do n't, do n't you?" replied Silas.

"Wasn't it *your* eyes that ferreted out Tim McCoy and his gang in the old church that night when they smoked us out o' school? An' when we was goin' to give up the search, was n't it *you* that found the key in the door, that proved as plain as the nose on yer face that the scalawags was in there somewheres?"

"Now, gentlemen, go light there, please," said Sam, moving uneasily, as this reference brought all too vividly to his recollection the regretful past.

"Sure enough, Sam," replied Silas, in a softer tone. "I forgot that you used to train with that crowd."

Sam Smallwood's reformation had been so thorough, and his identification with the better class of boys was now so complete, that they had ceased to regard him as a newcomer among them.

"I guess it 's a good thing," continued Sam, "that Archie *did* see me that night. Before then I used to think that the only smart boys about these diggin's was the wild ones. I did n't want to be called a good boy, and I did n't know any way to be a smart one but to be doin' something bad all the time. But when we got found out that night, I was done. I told Tim that playin' the fool was n't what it was cracked up to be, and that the fellows that

caught us in that trick was a heap smarter than we was."

'Well," said Silas, "I didn't mean to hurt nobody's feelin's by what I said, of course. We 've got no sort o' grudge against you, Sam; I only wanted to put Archie in mind that a feller can see lots o' things, and hear lots o' things, too, when he keeps his eyes and ears open."

"Seeing things, though, is n't all there is in being a detective," replied Archie. "I saw Sam that night at the window of the old church; but it took more grit than I had to climb up into that spire. If Silas thinks we can all do what *he* can, he 's making a mistake."

"I 'm not making any mistake about it," was the answer. "There 's lots o' business on our hands here jest now. If we ain't a-goin' to give up to these Mollies, we 've got 'em to fight; an' I want to have a hand in stampin' 'em out!"

This was said in a tone of great earnestness, and with a vehement gesticulation that provoked a smile from the rest of the party.

"Silas," said Archie, in a tone of mock gravity, "do n't mix your figures of speech so. If you 're going to *stamp* anything out, take your *feet* to it, and keep your *hands* for something else."

This raised a laugh, and then Silas said:

"Archie, that ain't fair. You fellows that takes to learnin' like a duck takes to water ought n't to be a-pokin' fun at a chap like me. I never could learn anything out o' books, an' I have n't got anything to go on but muscle. Now with some o' you fellows to see things, an' some o' the rest of us to do what we can, I 'm sure we can give the Mollies some trouble, an' p'r'aps bag some of 'em."

"If it 's muscle that 's wanted, you may count me in," said Mac; "for that 's about all I 've got."

Mac was next in size to Silas—fully as tall, but not quite so stout.

"You fellows talk about having nothing to go on but muscle," said Archie; "but whose brains have we got to depend on now for any plan of real detective work? Come, Silas, speak out, and let us know what you mean. Perhaps you have n't got much 'book learning,' as you call it, but everybody knows you 've got three full gauges of mother-wit, and that 's often of more account than book learning. Tell us what we 're to do."

"Well," said Silas, "my plan is for us to pick out some more fellows—I mean the kind o' fellows we can trust—an' make ourselves into a set o' detectives. We want to have enough of us

to watch every man that we think is a Mollie, so as to know where he is all the time, an' what he's a-doin'. If he leaves Camerton, we must find out where he's gone an' what he's gone for. Then, we must find out where they meet. I've caught onto this already, that they do n't meet at Barney Dillon's any more. I guess it was gettin' too hot for 'em there; they could n't go up-stairs any more without bein' noticed. But I'll bet they're colloguing together somewheres."

All the party now took hold of the project with a good deal of enthusiasm. It seemed at least possible that they might gather some items of information that would be of service to the men whom Sandy Cameron and his assistants were trying to lead on to a successful resistance of Mollie Maguire usurpation and tyranny.

The details of the plan could not all be perfected at this first meeting. They selected several other young fellows who were to be admitted into their organization. These were to be seen in the meantime, and brought to the meeting the next evening; for one of the things already settled was, that they would meet every evening to report what they had found out during the day.

It will be noticed that this meeting was held at the same time that Archie's father and James

Shryock were in consultation with Sandy Cameron at the latter's house. The boys' meeting lasted longer than that of the seniors; or, rather, after concluding their talk, the juniors, acting upon a hint from Silas, dispersed themselves among the crowd, keeping their ears open to pick up any stray bit of information that might serve as a clue.

When Archie reached home, he found his father there, and asked him what he thought of their plan.

"Well, I've no doubt you younger chaps can find out some things that we older ones can't," was the reply. "But be careful, and don't rush into danger. Remember, Archie, that you'll be suspected more than some of the other boys will."

"I've thought of that," replied Archie; "but I shall be under suspicion anyhow, whether I do anything or not."

After the success of the first day's attempt to resume work, the boys were in high spirits when they met that evening to complete their plans. Archie's unexpected transfer to the west entry was decided to be a good thing—"the best thing that could 'a' happened," said Silas; "for the worst nest o' Mollies about Camerton is right in that west entry; but," he added, "I'll be blamed if I can tell what they mean by goin'

to work to-day. That thing puzzles me, and Archie 'll have the job o' findin' out what they're up to."

"I'm afraid," replied Archie, "that finding them out will be an uphill business; but I'll do the best I can."

The other boys who had been invited to join them were present, and entered into the project with great spirit. When it came to selecting, each one, his man to be shadowed, Silas startled the group by saying:

"Boys, I've got a piece o' news for you. That skunk, Tim McCoy, 's back again, and I'll take him for my man."

"What!" cried several voices at once. "How do you know he 's back? Who told you?"

"Nobody told me; I saw him myself."

"When?"

"Last night, after we left here. On my way home I went by Pat McCoy's, just to see what I could see; an' I noticed that the window curtains was drawed tight. Now that ain't common in that house, an' I thought there might be some sort of a circus a-goin' on inside. I knew they had a load o' hay just put into their cow-stable where I could hide, an' so I went in an' clomb up into the loft, an' thought I'd stay there, an' see who come out o' the house. I was wrong about there bein' a party o' Mollies there, for

SILAS DISCOVERS TIM.

Pat was out himself. After a little he came home, an' just as I was gettin' down, feelin' a bit disappointed, the back door opened again, an' I could hardly believe my own eyes when there stood Tim. He looked all around, an' then sneaked out with his head ducked down, an' came into the stable to attend to something about the cow. He was near enough to me for me to stick the pitchfork into him, an' I had half a mind to do it."

"What do you suppose he came home for?" asked one of the boys.

"Have n't any idea," answered Silas; "but one thing 's sure, he ain't here for any good, an' he 'll bear watchin'."

Chapter XXVIII.

FATHER RAFFERTY.

IT will now be seen that Archie had a double reason for gratification over the fact that he had stumbled upon the secret conclave of the chief conspirators in the old workings of the west entry. While conscious of the real value of his discovery to the working party, he may be pardoned also for feeling a little elated that, as a detective, he would probably be able to measure up even with his fellow-members of the association.

He had received his appointment the night before—"to shadow" Pat McCoy, and several others, in the west entry—with many misgivings. He was more afraid of Pat McCoy than of any other man in Camerton. Having shared to the full the common and exaggerated estimate of Pat's great abilities, he now found himself almost superstitious in his dread of the man

who was strongly suspected of being the leading spirit of the evil-minded Brotherhood in Camerton. The most timorsome raw recruit in the British army, on finding himself suddenly pitted against "Old Bony" in military strategy, could scarcely have been more dismayed than was Archie at the task of "shadowing" and circumventing Pat McCoy; and he made up his mind that he could better serve the cause by shifting the burden upon some one else. His plan was all arranged during the morning of that second day in the west entry,—he would appeal to Mr. Harris to be reinstated in his old position, and would suggest that Silas Coleman be prevailed upon to accommodate the situation by becoming, for the present, the chief driver in the west entry. If any young fellow in the Slope could penetrate and foil Pat McCoy, Silas could. This, at least, was Archie's conclusion. But before he had time to carry out his plan the event of the afternoon rendered its execution unnecessary.

As we have seen, Archie felt that it was his duty to communicate his discovery to his father and the other leaders of the opposition before he reported it to his fellow-detectives, so that, if deemed necessary, immediate action might be had for the protection of the imperiled lives. He traced his father that evening to the company's office, where a consultation was in prog-

ress between the managers and the leaders of the working party. The door was locked, and Archie was at first denied admittance. He then asked to see his father and Sandy Cameron. When the two came outside, he gave them, in a few words, an outline of what he had witnessed scarcely two hours before. Their amazement was depicted in their countenances.

"Here, boy," said Sandy, interrupting the statement, and catching Archie by the shoulder, "come inside. The rest o' them must hear this at once."

The party in the inner office could see, from Sandy's looks and his firm grip on Archie, that an important communication was about to be made, and expectancy sat on their faces. The group was composed very nearly of the men Archie expected to see there: Mr. Morgan, Mr. Harris, half a dozen of the leading miners, and, besides these, a personage whose presence there surprised him very much—Father Rafferty.

The good priest was greatly grieved over the recent outbreak of lawlessness in his parish, and the letter sent him by Sandy Cameron and the others had received his prompt attention. He had come at once to consult with the leaders of the opposition to the Mollie Maguire movement, and to see in what way he could best assist them.

"Here, gentlemen," said Sandy, as he thrust Archie into the midst of the group, "here is a young man who has something to say that will be worth the while o' listening to. Now, Archie," he added, "tell them how ye came to be in the old workings, and what ye saw and heard there."

As may be imagined, Archie's statement was listened to with wondering interest, which, notwithstanding the fact that two of the party present were marked for the vengeance of the Mollies, gave place presently to confidence and exultation.

"We 've got them in our grasp!" said the superintendent, excitedly, bringing his fist down on his desk with a force that shook the building.

"That 's so! We 'll clean 'em out now, sure as a gun!" added one of the miners.

Archie's statement of what he had seen and heard covered the ground pretty thoroughly; but notwithstanding this, he was plied with questions touching every possible feature of the case, Father Rafferty in particular subjecting him to a cross-examination, kindly in its manner, but pointed and searching. He was satisfied at last, and very evidently gratified by the clearness, promptness, and unvarying exactness of the replies.

"Now, gentlemen," said the priest, turning from Archie to the others, "what use shall we make of these surprising facts? What is the best method of procedure?"

"I am not clear about that," replied the superintendent, a look of perplexity succeeding the recent exultant glow upon his features.

All the party were somewhat sobered by the realization that they had now a problem to deal with which required careful thought.

"The hour is late," remarked the priest, glancing at his watch, "and you men that have worked hard to-day should have your suppers. Prompt action is necessary, undoubtedly; but it should be well-considered action. A mistake just here may be fatal. Can we not meet a little later this evening, to decide upon our plan of procedure? I confess that I am perplexed as to the very first step to take, and should like to have a little time for reflection."

Nine o'clock was mentioned as the hour for reassembling in the company's office. Father Rafferty declined Mr. Morgan's invitation to tea, stating that he had an engagement a mile or more from the village, and that it would keep him busy to get back by the time appointed.

Just as the party was breaking up, Archie said that he would like to ask a question. All was silent in a moment.

"Gentlemen, I belong to a kind of detective association that we boys have formed among ourselves, to find out all we can about the Mollies. We are to meet every evening, to report whatever we have found out during the day. I wish to ask if you think it proper for me to tell the boys to-night what I have discovered this afternoon?"

"Not a word, my son!—not a word to any other human being!" said Father Rafferty, in a very decided manner, laying his hand on Archie's shoulder, and looking straight into his face.

"Not a word from any of the rest of us to any human being, either," suggested Mr. Morgan, with equal earnestness.

"'Mum' is the word!" said Mr. Harris, glancing quickly at the men.

"'Mum' it is!" was the answer of them all.

While his father and the others were gone to get their suppers, Archie turned slowly toward the place where he was to meet his fellow-detectives. He was asking himself what report he could make, since he must be "mum" about the only event of the day.

"Hello, Arch! Are you spinnin' yer yarn as you go along?" inquired Silas, who at that moment joined him, and noticed his abstracted air.

"I was wondering what a poor stick of a detective, with no report to make, ought to say in a crowd of fellows who have been doing something," replied Archie.

"Now, Arch, that 's all put on! Tell us what you was doin' in the office with them bigbugs. That 'll be report enough for one evening," and Silas looked sharply into Archie's face.

"I went there to find my father, because he was n't home to supper. I guess they 've been holding some sort of a confab."

"Was Father Rafferty in the powwow with the rest o' them?" asked Silas.

"I suppose so. He came out of the inside office with the others," replied Archie.

As nothing of special interest was contained in any of the reports, the business meeting of the detectives was concluded in short order. It was felt to be important that they betake themselves at once to their several stations, to keep an eye on the suspected parties, and find out whether they would "collogue together anywhere" that night, as Silas put it. He also stated that he wanted assistance in watching Pat McCoy's house till midnight. He would take the last two hours himself, if one or two of the others would take the intervening time. Pete Pritchard and Barney Smalls, two of the new recruits in the detective service, volunteered

for this duty, and at once, by direction of Silas, started for the hiding-place in the hayloft of the cow-stable.

Nine o'clock found all the parties who had been present earlier in the evening, assembled once more in the company's office, including Archie, who had been invited to be present. It then appeared that, with the exception of Father Rafferty, no one had thought of any method of procedure, other than to announce what had been discovered to the officers of the law, and have the authors of the murderous plot proceeded against by regular process.

"Law methods," remarked Father Rafferty, "are necessarily slow and tedious; and in this case there is danger that they may fail to accomplish our object, which should be not merely the punishment of a few offenders, but the arousing of the whole community, so as to make it impossible for such an evil association to live and flourish among us. Further than this, have you pondered the fact, gentlemen, that we encounter a difficulty the moment we enter a court of justice, and seek to convict men of a terrible crime upon the testimony of one witness, and he a stripling? Having the fullest confidence in this youth ourselves, is it certain that we can induce a court and jury to share that confidence so as to accept his sole testimony as

proof conclusive of the guilt of those men? Is there not a surer and at the same time a swifter way to accomplish our object? Is there not a method by which we can use our knowledge of this diabolical plot so as at once to startle and arouse the public mind to effective action?"

"If you can suggest a method, Father Rafferty, by which this discovery can be utilized with the greatest possible effect, we shall be glad to learn of it," said the superintendent.

"My thought is," continued the priest, "that the knowledge of this plot coming to the community in the usual way, passing from mouth to mouth by degrees, could not possibly have the same effect as if communicated to all alike in a great gathering, at the same instant, and by the same person. I will answer for the conscience and the public spirit of these several communities so far as to say that the knowledge of this foul plot, if we do not blunder in the method of communicating it, will be sufficient to arouse a whirlwind of popular indignation that will sweep away Mollie Maguirism root and branch!"

"I believe you are right," replied Mr. Morgan.

"Your idea, Father Rafferty, if I understand it," said Sandy Cameron, "is to bring this thing before the men of the other mines as well."

"All the men," replied the priest, "who have been accustomed to meet in conference at the big meadow—let them be summoned for a meeting to-morrow, and take every care to have them all present. Let Archie, then and there, make the same statement that he has made to us, and leave the rest to me."

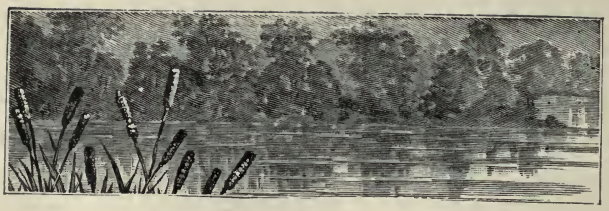
"That 's the thing exactly!" said Sandy. "I agree to that."

"So do I; so do I!" echoed around the room.

"It 's a happy thought, and I am sure we are greatly indebted to Father Rafferty for suggesting it," said Mr. Harris.

"No indebtedness to me, I assure you," returned the priest, as he bade the party good-night. "I am the rather under obligation to the rest of you for your hearty consent and co-operation."

It only remained to write the notices, and arrange to have them posted early the next morning. To make it certain that there should be no failure in this part of the program, several of the miners present agreed to post up the notices themselves in the several mining villages.



Chapter XXIX.

ANOTHER AFTERNOON AT THE BIG MEADOW.

A CONFERENCE! a conference! There was an almost electric power in this word, as it passed from mouth to mouth the next morning, when the troops of idle men and boys began to congregate around the written notices which invited the miners to a conference that afternoon. They were glad to receive the summons.

Such a call had its charms even in peaceful and quiet times. It always meant something new, and half the time nobody seemed to know just what, until the conference was regularly organized and the business presented in a formal manner. In busy seasons a conference meant a break in the monotony and humdrum of every-day life; it meant at least half a day's outing, and possibly something of still greater importance to the miners—it might be some

new proposition, which promised to better their condition and make life easier for them.

In the present troubled period, the call was unusually welcome, coming as it did from the working party in the Camerton Slope. The idlers were already growing restless and dissatisfied, especially those of them who really wanted to be at work, but had been afraid to make the venture. They felt ashamed of their own cowardice. It would have been nobler, they now felt, to have taken the same position as the Camerton men, and risk the consequences. Besides this, the working party had not been molested. Why should not others go to work also?

The leaders of the strike were surprised at the call, but at once began to exult over it. They understood it to mean that the working party had wearied of their experiment, or were afraid to hold out longer against the majority, and now meant to announce their acquiescence in the strike.

The day was one of the most inviting that ever dawned upon the mountain country of Pennsylvania. October was well advanced, but latterly the weather had been almost as warm as in midsummer. The autumn tints had richly decorated the woods, and the soft, hazy balm of Indian summer was in the atmosphere. All

nature seemed to be luxuriating in its bath of delicious sunlight, as the army of miners, constantly swelling in numbers, pressed on in various columns toward the place of rendezvous. Two o'clock had been named as the time for the meeting, but the proceedings did not begin till nearly an hour later. It was the policy of the Camerton leaders to delay until the miners—laggards and all—were on hand. One reason for this was, that every mine might be as fully represented as possible; but the principal ground for delay was, that the proceedings, once commenced, might not be interrupted by the peculiar salutations sometimes accorded to latecomers.

Whatever might be the occasion of a conference, or whatever clashing of opinions might disturb its later progress, the men—both young and old—were usually in hilarious mood at the opening, and could not at once settle down to serious business. While some spent the waiting interval in smoking their pipes, greeting their friends, and exchanging the news of the various localities, others, and particularly the younger element, amused themselves with such games as opportunity afforded; such as pitching quoits—using stones for quoits—jumping, wrestling, and running. But all these various groups would at once turn from their employ-

ments to join in cheering or chaffing a squad of late arrivals, and the present occasion proved to be no exception to the rule.

"Hist, boys!" cried one, of a noisy party, "there comes the Corkonians!"

"It's wrong ye are," replied another; "them's the 'Far-downs'—the regular 'bog-trotters.'"

"Well, never mind; let's give them the salute o' honor, anyway."

And a chorus of dismal and prolonged groans, from a hundred throats, announced the arrival of the men from one of the small, outlying mines.

"Ye followed some wagon, and got led asthray intirely, did ye?" cried a voice, as soon as any one could be heard.

"That be n't it at all," shouted a short, thick-set, comical-looking Englishman, dressed in a smock, after the fashion of his native country; "them be the 'lost tribes o' Israel,' just a-comin' 'ome again."

Scarcely had this sally subsided, when the attention of the crowd was attracted toward another quarter:

"Germany! Germany!" shouted a voice; "Germany 's a-gettin' here with both feet! Hurrah for Germany! hip, hip, hurrah!"

This was really a rousing cheer, given with a will, and accompanied with the swinging of

hats, and other boisterous demonstrations of welcome. Yet it could scarcely be said that the Germans were particular favorites. They were as liable, at any other time, to be greeted with groans—as the "Far-downs" had been—according as the capricious, ever-changing mood of the crowd might suggest.

These Germans were a kind of colony to themselves. They were the principal working-force of one of the mines which, together with the village in which they lived, was known in all the mining region as "Germany." Quite a number of them could speak but very little English, and their habits and general mode of life were such as they had followed in their own land.

With the arrival of the Germans, all the mines were pretty fully represented; and now, in accordance with the usual custom, the men representing the mine which had summoned the conference, proceeded to call the meeting to order, and organize it by nominating the officers. It was Sandy Cameron who thus opened the proceedings on behalf of the Camerton working party, and the men suggested by him were at once chosen, by a unanimous vote, as the officers of the meeting. This done, Sandy stepped down from the platform, and took his place among the men. The president acknowl-

edged the honor of his selection for that position in a few sensible words, and then stated that he had no knowledge whatever of the object for which the meeting was called, and he requested that some one should now bring forward the business.

At this point, Father Rafferty rose up from the place where he had been sitting among the Camerton men, and, to the great surprise of most persons present, mounted the stand. It was not usual for anybody but the miners themselves to take part in these conferences; and the curiosity which had been awakened by Father Rafferty's presence on the ground grew more lively as it became evident that he was about to make some statement, perhaps on behalf of the working party.

"Gentlemen," began the priest, in his kindly, persuasive, yet far-reaching and impressive tones, "I am not here to take any part in those matters which are usually the subjects of conferences in this place. Many of you know me well enough to bear witness that, while I have been keenly interested in your welfare, I have never been disposed to meddle with those questions which you, as miners, have a right to settle among yourselves, and for yourselves. I am here to-day, not to make a speech to you myself, but simply to introduce a gentle-

man who has a message for you—a brief message, but one of the very greatest importance. I need scarcely ask you to hear him with the closest attention. Before mentioning his name, however, I may add that this conference has been called at my suggestion, because I desire to consult with you upon the subject of this gentleman's communication. It is, as I have said, a very important matter—a matter that concerns human life." Here the priest stopped; but the strained attention and breathless silence of the men seemed to insist that he go on.

"It is within the knowledge of most of you," he added, "that certain misguided men have seen fit to attempt to introduce into this region a diabolical fraternity known as the MOLLIE MAGUIRES. That Brotherhood is setting out on the same course of lawless violence and bloodshed here which has marked its pathway elsewhere; and the proof of this is, that two men of your number, honest and honorable men—one of whom is present with you to-day—have been marked for assassination and death at the hands of this murderous conspiracy—"

At this point the words of the priest became indistinguishable. The men, who had been listening with an eager interest that grew more and more intense as the slow and measured sentences of the speaker fell upon their ears, could restrain

themselves no longer. As by one impulse, those who had been sitting or lolling upon the grass, rose to their feet, and looked with a meaning glance into each other's faces, while a murmur of astonishment and indignation ran through the entire crowd. This first burst of excited feeling was quickly over, and the men were quiet again, and bending eagerly forward to hear more.

"Ay!" continued Father Rafferty, "I don't wonder that you look with horror into one another's faces to see who it is that 's doomed to die like a dog, or who it is that 's guilty of the blood of a fellow-workman—"

"The names! the names!" shouted a voice. "Give us the names of the men that are marked for death."

"Listen!" cried the priest, motioning with his hand for silence, as scores of voices continued to echo the demand for the names. "Listen, and you shall have them."

Again the vast crowd subsided into perfect stillness, in the midst of which Father Rafferty said:

"The names of the men who have been marked for death at the hands of the Mollie Maguires are Frank Harris, the mining boss of the Camerton Slope, and Sandy Cameron, the veteran miner of the same mine."

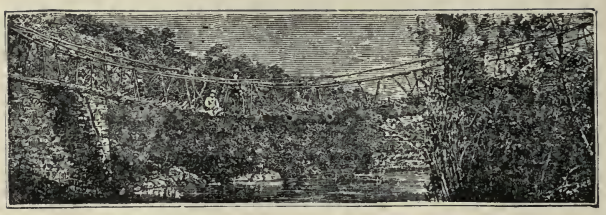
A howl of horror and rage broke from the crowd, and a hundred men pressed their way toward the stand, and formed a body-guard around the group of Camerton men in which Sandy Cameron was sitting. Mr. Harris was not present.

"Who's going to kill him? Who's going to touch a hair o' Sandy Cameron's head?" cried a big man, in a voice of thunder, as he leaped upon the stand, and shook his great fist in a way that was dangerous for everybody round about him.

Father Rafferty's effort at arousing "a whirlwind" had succeeded beyond his expectations; and he now found it necessary to exert himself to the utmost to restore order, so that he might complete the program he had marked out. It was no easy task to quiet several hundred men who were already angrily vociferating the names of the various miners who were suspected of belonging to the Brotherhood. As soon as Father Rafferty could make himself heard again, he said:

"Gentlemen, these are grave charges, and I do not ask you to accept what I have said without the proof; and so I will at once introduce the person who, as I told you awhile ago, has an important message for you. Archie Atkins,"

cried the priest, elevating his voice, "come to the stand, and tell these men what you know of the secret plottings of the Mollie Maguires against the lives of Frank Harris and Sandy Cameron."



Chapter XXX.

THE RESULT OF THE CONFERENCE.

IT was afterwards remarked that Archie's previous life must have been a providential course of training for this occasion. Without his hard experience as one of the group imprisoned by the flood in the south entry, he would not have been nearly so well known to the miners present, and the mention of his name could not possibly have aroused the same degree of interest. Without his persistent efforts at self-improvement, and in particular his practice in the art of public speaking acquired in the Camerton Literary and Debating Society, he could not have made the clear, concise, and really convincing statement which he did that day.

In the most natural manner possible, he told of his unexpected assignment to duty in the west entry, and of his desire to explore the

worked-out part of it; how the dropping of his lamp, and his neglect to carry his matches with him, compelled him to grope his way out in the dark; of his gratification when at length he discovered a solitary light in the distance, followed by a sense of mystery when it became evident that the light was stationary; his amazement when he ascertained that, instead of one man, there was a group of five, and that they were on their knees in the attitude of prayer. All that had subsequently taken place in that meeting of the inner council was then related, until at last the whole scene was before the conference, including the names of the conspirators (which had been loudly called for before the statement was concluded).

At the mention of the names another outburst of indignant murmurs arose from the crowd, accompanied with cries of—

"Lynch! Lynch!"

"Hang them!"

"String them up, every mother's son o' them!"

And for a time it seemed that Pat McCoy and his fellow-counselors could not escape the summary vengeance of the thoroughly excited crowd. Again Father Rafferty loudly rapped with his cane for order.

"Would it not be well, gentlemen," he in-

quired, "to ask this young man some questions? His statement, if true, discloses a terrible condition of things in this mining region, and something must be done about it. But," he asked, with startling energy of manner, "is this remarkable statement true?"

"Ay! Ay!"

"Of course it is!"

"Not a man on this ground doubts it!"

These and a storm of similar responses from every quarter of the assembly told the deep conviction of the men that they had it now in their power to bring to bay the chief plotters against the peace of the community, and many of them were not disposed to be content with half-way measures. The air was thick with curses and imprecations upon the heads of the would-be murderers, who sat at no great distance from each other, utterly overwhelmed by this unlooked-for exposure of their plot, and answering only with wild and general denials.

Owing to the confusion that now obtained, it seemed impossible to settle anything in the open meeting, and at the suggestion of Father Rafferty, a committee of two from each mine was appointed, with instructions to retire and deliberate upon the matter, and suggest to the body what course of action should be pursued.

The committee deliberated long. Scarcely

a man of them was willing to commit the matter to the slow and doubtful processes of the law. They were familiar with the miscarriages of justice in other coal-fields of the State, where the courts seemed powerless to circumvent the secret plottings of the Brotherhood, and to punish the perpetrators of the numerous cold-blooded murders continually occurring. The majority were for prompt and vigorous measures.

"It 's a dreadful thing to do," said one of the men; "but I 'm thinking that not to do it will be a heap more dreadful. There 's no way out of it; we must hang these murderers to one of these trees before we go home."

"That 's right," replied another; "we shall be as guilty as they are, if we let them slip through our fingers now."

"It 's out o' the question," said a third, "to talk of doing anything else. If we spare their lives, some o' ours will have to pay the forfeit."

"I don't want to shed blood," remarked another member of the committee; "but since it 's come to be a question of their blood, or the blood of a good many better men than they ever thought of being, I 'll hang them myself before I'll let them go on to take the lives of Sandy Cameron and Frank Harris, and nobody knows how many more."

While these deliberations were going forward

in the committee, the principal body of the miners were keeping guard over the conspirators, alternately showering reproaches upon them, and then exhorting them to prepare for death. Others, not doubting what the issue would be, were looking about for suitable trees to serve the purpose of a gallows.

The Camerton members of the committee—James Shryock and George Atkins—would not agree to take the lives of the five men, and entered a very decided protest against such a step. It would not be right to do so, they argued. No murder had actually been committed, and society was not justified in hanging men for simply uttering threats against others. It had the right to protect itself against the carrying out of those threats, and in some way to punish the offenders, but not by hanging them. To take their lives would be impolitic as well as wrong—it would react against the miners generally, and give occasion for a perfect epidemic of Mollie Maguire outrages by way of revenge. Besides this, the law would be compelled to take account of and punish—perhaps even with death itself—the perpetrators of such a crime.

This view of the case, urged with great earnestness by the Camerton men, was not without its effect upon the others. It prepared them to listen more favorably to a proposition

which had originated with Father Rafferty to the effect that the committee recommend a sentence of banishment, rather than of death, against the guilty parties.

This suggestion was received at first in silence, and with many a dubious shake of the head. But presently the men thought better of it. It relieved them of a dreadful responsibility, while at the same time it promised to be just as effectual as more extreme measures in uprooting Mollie Maguirism. The committee was soon ready to report.

Amid a breathless silence, Michael Hutchinson, a representative of the Hawksville mine, and the oldest member of the committee, who was appointed to make the report, ascended the platform. He began by reciting what had taken place in the committee—that the first feeling of the members was that such bloody plottings deserved to be visited with death; but there were weighty reasons why the mining community should not stain its hands with the blood of men who were not as yet actually guilty of bloodshed. These reasons were mentioned in well-considered words, and then followed the announcement of the committee's recommendation: *That the five guilty men be banished, on pain of death, finally and forever, from the coal-fields of the State of Pennsylvania;* and that a

vigilance committee, consisting of representatives from the several mines, be appointed to see that this sentence was carried out, and to take whatever steps might be necessary to protect the mining-region from any further plottings of the Mollie Maguires.

This report was instantly challenged; and a fierce discussion followed. The chairman found it impossible for some time to preserve even the semblance of order, a score of men being on their feet at the same time, each vociferating his protest in his own way; and such was the jargon of voices that nobody could distinguish anything that was being said. At this juncture, the chairman—who had been selected for a possibly stormy session—surprised even those who knew him best, by his vigorous measures. Seizing a short and narrow piece of plank, he plied it with such force upon the rude, resounding desk in front of him as to completely drown the babel of voices; and the noisy declaimers, overmatched at their own game, gave up the contest, and sank down again upon the ground in silence.

"Gentlemen," cried the chairman, intermitting his raps with the board, "you elected me to preside over a conference, and then you do your best to turn the conference into a mob! I won't preside over a mob, and such scenes of

disorder must not be repeated. It 's a matter of life and death that we 're trying to settle, and you must keep order!"

After this tempest had spent itself, there was no further interruption to the orderly progress of the meeting, though the discussion was very earnest. The main points urged against the committee's report were: That it was needful to strike terror to the heart of the evil organization by executing at one stroke the men who had dared to introduce it into that region. This was only a matter of simple justice, and hanging was too good for such wretches. There was no power in this conference to make a decree of banishment effectual; and to pronounce such a sentence was really to turn the murderers loose, and let them go unwhipped of justice. And besides this, what protection did such a course promise to the two men whose lives it was the solemn duty of the community to protect from the Mollie Maguire vengeance?

The last speaker was Sandy Cameron. He said that, as one of the two men whose lives had been threatened, he would beg of the conference not to commit the blunder of taking away the lives of the five men whose crime had been brought to light so unexpectedly. Did any sane man believe that putting these men to death would end the trouble? Who could sup-

pose for a moment that the far-reaching Brotherhood to which they belonged would take no account of such an execution? Was it not more likely that the death of these men would be revenged fivefold? He entreated them not to enter upon a course which must result in converting all this mining region into a slaughter-pen. The best course to pursue was to discourage the establishment of the evil-minded Brotherhood in their midst by making it certain that every man who listened to their wicked counsels would be detected and exposed, and would forfeit his place in the community.

The vote was then taken upon the adoption of the committee's recommendation, and it was carried by a decided majority. The five men were then conducted to the front of the stand, and asked if they would, upon the condition that their lives were spared, take a solemn obligation to quit the neighborhood at once, sever their connection with the Mollie Maguire organization, and engage in no more conspiracies against human life. To this they all promptly agreed, and the chairman then administered the obligation in a most impressive manner, each of the five assenting to its provisions with uplifted hand, while all the rest of the conference stood with bared heads as silent witnesses of their obligation. After the vigilance commit-

tee had been appointed and the strike declared "off," the conference adjourned.

The afternoon had waned. One of the most perfect of days was succeeded by one of the most inviting of evenings. Banks of cloud, still crimson from the sun's last rays, appeared to rest upon the mountain which separated many of the men from their homes, and to cross that mountain would not be easy work in the darkness, yet they seemed to be in no hurry about setting out. No such conference had ever been held in that place before; none had ever been called to pass upon such serious issues.

The men could not help contrasting this meeting with the one that had preceded it. It seemed scarcely credible that within the short space of four days two conferences, so opposite in tone and temper, could have been held by the same set of men. It was remarked that at the former meeting the Camerton men could not, by their utmost endeavors, succeed in bracing up the terror-stricken crowd to join them in presenting a bold front to the Mollie Maguire Brotherhood; while to-day, but for the powerful opposition of the Camerton leaders, the aroused feeling of the conference would by this time have hanged all the known members of the hated order to the neighboring

trees. The mood of the men had changed. It was more self-reliant and self-respecting; and they lingered, it seemed, simply to exchange mutual congratulations.

The real breaking up did not take place until the vigilance committee, after completing their arrangements, began the homeward march with the "prisoners" under their charge.

Chapter XXXI.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS.

ARCHIE was puzzled, during the latter part of the afternoon, to account for the absence of Silas and Mac. The rest of the boys were there, very interested spectators of what was going on, and as much taken aback as anybody else when Archie was introduced and began to make a report of his detective work—a report which was no more surprising to the crowd of miners than it was to his fellow-detectives. They thought he might at least have given them an inkling of the part he was to take in the day's proceedings, but were satisfied when he told them of the injunction to strict secrecy which he had received from Father Rafferty and the others at the meeting in the company's office.

"But say, Archie," asked Sam Smallwood, "where 's Mac and Silas?"

"I do n't know. Are n't they here?"

"No, they 're not. We 've looked everywheres for 'em, and they 're not about. Say, now, Arch," continued Sam, looking curiously into Archie's face, "honor bright, an' no foolin'— do n't you know where they are?"

"I give you my word of honor," replied Archie, in the most positive tone, "that I do n't know any more about where they are than you do. I thought they were here, and I can't imagine what 's kept them away."

"Well, all right then," said Sam. "We did n't know but there might be some more underground work on foot, and, if you was n't tied up too close by the big-bugs, we wanted to find out what it was."

The fact that Archie was not aware of the absence of Silas and Mac is easily accounted for. Like many another youthful orator called upon to make important statements before a large audience, he found himself considerably agitated as the time drew near. He shunned the company even of his particular friends as much as possible, and went the greater part of the way to the big meadow alone, through the woods and bypaths, so that he might have an opportunity to "rehearse" his part, and get ready to state the facts in the case in the clearest manner and in the fewest words possible.

He had not seen Silas since the night before, and had not yet missed him from the conference when the other boys came to him, as just related, in the interval while the committee were deliberating upon the case of the five guilty men. It was not until they reached home that night that the absence of Silas and Mac was accounted for.

A new surprise greeted the Camerton men on arriving at the village, as they did, for the most part, in a body. Tim McCoy had been arrested, and was in the "jug!" This was the familiar name of the one-story log hut, lined with boiler-iron, which stood on the green near the company's store, and served as a village jail.

At first nobody seemed to know certainly who had made the arrest, or why it was done; but it was beyond question that Tim was in the lock-up, and scores of men and boys went to see him, and talked with him through the grated window. It was certainly Tim—a good deal abashed and crestfallen at finding himself in such a situation. In explaining his arrest to the eager questioners who thronged about the window, Tim was compelled to admit that he had gone from Camerton to Millington to take the train early that morning, and that he had been arrested in the act of getting on the train.

It was news to the people in general to learn that Tim had been lurking about Camerton during all the exciting events of the last few days. None of them had supposed him to be anywhere near the place. It was also said that a very important letter was found on Tim's person, and that this letter would make serious trouble for some people in Camerton. But all sorts of stories had gotten afloat concerning the affair, and nothing seemed to be positively established except the fact that Tim was in jail.

Archie and Sam got a glimpse of him through the window, and after listening to what various excited people had to say about the matter, the two began to suspect that Silas and Mac could throw more light upon the subject than anybody else, and went at once to look them up. They reached Mac's house first, and asked his mother if he was in.

"Yes," was the reply; "but he's upstairs asleep. He went out with Silas Coleman last night on a hunt after that worthless Tim McCoy, and he got back tired enough, just after the rest of you had started for the conference.

"Where did they go?" asked Archie.

"That's more than I can tell you. Suppose you go up and see him. It's time for him to wake up and get his supper anyhow."

Archie took the offered light, and led the

way into the little room where Mac slept—he had been there many a time before—and there lay Mac, only partly undressed, enjoying that luxury of deep sleep which only a hearty, growing youth, thoroughly tired out, knows anything about. It required no end of shaking to rouse him up.

"Here, Mac, wake up! Wake up, man, and tell us what you've been doing. Wake up, I say!" cried Archie, as he continued to shake Mac's inanimate form. Sam added some exhortations of his own, and re-enforced Archie's shakes with a series of vigorous slaps, until it was impossible for anybody not actually dead longer to resist their combined efforts.

"He 's coming to, ain't he?" said Sam.

"I hope so," replied Archie, who was beginning to be out of breath with his exertions. "If he do n't revive pretty soon, we 'll have to get a resurrectionist to undertake his case."

"What 's the matter?" said Mac at last in a drawling tone, after he had opened his eyes, and looked from one to the other.

"That's just what we want to find out," returned Archie. "Come, Mac, be alive, and tell us where you went last night, and what you've been doing."

Mac sat upright and rubbed his eyes, and presently began to be himself again.

"O, but we had the greatest round last night," said he, "and just lots o' fun; and we came home tired to death—but we treed him."

Here Mac gave another yawn, and began stretching.

"We thought you fellows had something to do with it," said Sam, "and that 's why we 're here. We 're just a-dyin' to hear all about it. Wake up, Mac; quit yer gaping, an' tell us the whole bizness."

Mac now began in good earnest, and told them all about it. It will be remembered that young Pritchard and Smalls had been detailed the night before to keep watch over Pat McCoy's house from the cow-stable loft until Silas came to relieve them. Several men had gone into the house in the meantime, and Silas had not long to wait until they came out again. Later on, after Camerton had quieted down for the night, Pat and Tim came out together, and after exchanging a few words at the gate close beside the stable, Tim passed on down the alley with cautious step, and his father returned to the house.

Low as the tones had been, Silas, only a few feet away, watching them through a crack in the side of the stable—managed to catch the name "Millington." It was the only word he got distinctly, but it gave him an idea. Milling-

ton was the name of a small railroad station about ten miles from Camerton. Silas jumped at the conclusion that Tim was setting out to take the train at Millington, and that in all probability he was the bearer of some important message—it might be a written message. At all events it would be a good thing to intercept him, and, if possible, find out what the message was.

Acting upon this suggestion, he went and roused Mac, and together they went to 'Squire Hogan's, and obtained a warrant for Tim's arrest. Then the constable had to be aroused, and that functionary was at first very unwilling to accompany them on what he called "a wild-goose chase." He didn't believe that Tim was anywhere in that part of the country, and he was only convinced when Silas assured him that he had seen Tim less than an hour ago. As soon as he was satisfied on this point, he at once prepared to get his horse and go with them. They took a roundabout way for fear that Tim might discover them and hide himself.

The first train that stopped at Millington would reach there soon after daylight; and so there was not much time to lose, as it was two o'clock before they had all their arrangements made, and were ready to start. It was quite a tramp for the boys, as the distance was fully

three miles greater by the route they took than by the one Tim was supposed to have chosen. But the event justified the wisdom of their course. Half an hour before the train was due, they crossed the railroad nearly a mile below the station, and, making a circuit through the woods, lay concealed just opposite the little shed that served as a depot. They were not certain, of course, whether Tim would take the first train which went northward, or wait for the next one going in the opposite direction; but the question was soon decided.

Millington was a "flag-station;" and as soon as the train began to be heard in the distance, the party in waiting had the satisfaction of seeing Tim come out of an old bark-shed, and vigorously signal the engineer to stop. As Tim entered the train from the depot side, the constable mounted the steps on the opposite side. Tim was greatly astonished, but saw the folly of any resistance, and suffered the officer quietly to lead him out of the train, which at once moved off, leaving the party of four on the platform.

"Ye 're cunning, Tim," said the officer, after he had read the warrant; "but there's fellows on yer track that can beat ye out o' yer boots at yer own game."

Tim's feeling of chagrin and disappointment

was not in the least allayed when he discovered that Silas and Mac were the authors of his arrest.

"Ye see, Tim," said Silas, "we don't want for likely chaps to stray off and get lost; so we came out to look ye up."

"It was kind in you fellows; it was so," replied Tim, with only the faintest trace of a sneer in his tone. He was too thoroughly demoralized just at that moment to strike back with his usual vigor.

The party stopped at a farm-house near by to get some breakfast, and then commenced the return trip. The constable had carefully searched his prisoner before leaving the depot, and relieved him of a revolver and a sealed envelope. The latter, however, bore no address or writing of any kind on the outside.

Chapter XXXII.

JERRY COULEHAN AND HIS THREE "BOYS."

THE strike had been declared "off;" but the men found themselves in no mood to arrange to go to work the next morning. They felt more like taking the day to celebrate the downfall of Mollie Maguirism in their midst; and they proposed to see to it that the community was actually rid of the gang of murderers before they struck another blow. This, at least, was the sentiment that passed from mouth to mouth that night.

Then, too, the hearing of Tim McCoy was to take place in the morning, and everybody wanted to be present to see if any new developments were to take place. So, it was agreed late at night that the slope should have one more idle day.

The hearing really developed no new fact, but simply furnished additional evidence of the

correctness of the conclusions already arrived at. 'Squire Hogan opened the letter which had been found on Tim's person, in the presence of the crowd, and then passed it around for general inspection. It addressed no one by name, and was unsigned by any name. It simply called for a detail of men to "do a clean job" in the Camerton neighborhood. There was no doubt among those who read the letter that the "clean job" referred to was the intended murder of Frank Harris and Sandy Cameron. No one present could make out the meaning of some hieroglyphics, or cabalistic signs, which adorned the letter; and opinion was divided as to whether they contained the names of the proposed victims in the secret characters of the order, or were simply a kind of seal attesting the authenticity of the document.

Nobody appeared against Tim when the case was called in Squire Hogan's court; and he was promptly discharged from the custody of the law, only to be laid hold of by the vigilance committee. This result was due to an arrangement entered into between the vigilance committee and the Camerton leaders the night before. A strong feeling had developed that, as the community had undertaken to deal with Mollie Maguirism by a method of its own rather than by regular legal process, it was scarcely

worth while to make an exception of Tim's case. He was told that his release was conditioned upon his acceptance of the same decree of banishment that had been pronounced upon his father and the other conspirators.

Tim at once consented to the terms, and took the same obligation which the others had taken. And so it was a party of six who were that day conducted by the vigilance committee to a point several miles beyond Camerton, and then turned adrift, with the solemn warning that, if they violated their obligation in any particular, the penalty would be death—such a death as they themselves had marked out for Frank Harris and Sandy Cameron. Their families were to be allowed to remain until they should find work elsewhere and send for them.

This "extra-judicial" method of dealing with criminal conspiracy may not commend itself to some people; but there is this to be said for it—the cure was effectual. Mollie Maguirism made no further attempt to plant itself in the region where its most secret plottings had been so thoroughly ferreted out, and so effectually exposed. It could not flourish in such an atmosphere. And we may excuse the Camerton men for indulging the belief that if similar vigorous measures had been adopted east of the mountains, a memorable "reign of terror" would

have been averted, and many a cold-blooded murder prevented.

And now my story must draw to a close. It remains only to add that Archie Atkins continued to make good use of the opportunities afforded by Mr. Pancoast's night-school and the Camerton Literary and Debating Society. His father allowed him the use of his own earnings; and he found it possible—after paying his mother all she would receive for his board—to lay aside a sufficient sum to carry him through a course in one of the classical seminaries of his native State. Then he became a teacher for some years, and was strongly inclined to make this the business of his life; but an unlooked-for current of events carried him into a different career.

While teaching in a Western institution he had among his pupils a bright lad, the son of an eminent lawyer who became governor of the State. The teacher had become greatly attached to his pupil, and through him had not only made the acquaintance of the family, but had become a frequent and familiar guest of the household. It was quite a surprise to Archie, however, when one day the governor sent for him, and asked him to accept the position of State Inspector of Mines.

"Professor Atkins," as he was now called,

was well qualified for such a position. His early practical experience furnished a good foundation on which to graft a special study of the problems of ventilation, hours of labor, wages, and all the other questions which involved the health, the safety, and the general interests of the mining population.

Besides attaining well-merited professional distinction, his high Christian character and pleasing style of public address brought him frequently before the people upon important occasions. He became as well known in the various branches of the Young Men's Christian Association, and in the Sunday-schools of the large district which he traveled, as he was in the mining circles.

Mac Castle and Sam Smallwood were both induced, through Archie's influence, to apply themselves to study. Mac graduated in medicine, and settled down in Hawksville, where he obtained a good practice. Sam Smallwood became a mining-boss, and then a coal operator on his own account.

Silas Coleman could not be induced to follow the example of the others with respect to self-improvement. He had no relish for books, though he was by nature not inferior to any of them in capacity; but he could not be made to realize this.

"It's no use, boys," he said. "Some fellows was made to dig coal, an' that's me. I can dig as much coal as any man in Camerton; an' what's the use to spoil a good miner to make a poor scholar out o' him?"

However, after Sam began his operations, he persuaded Silas to qualify himself for the position of mining-boss, and employed him in that capacity.

Jerry Coulehan's liking for legal studies proved to be enduring. If he did not realize his dream of becoming "a great lawyer," he attained a grasp of legal subjects which was very surprising in a man whose intellectual awakening and moral reform came so late in life. He succeeded 'Squire Hogan in office as the local magistrate; and, despite a tendency to pomposity in his manner, an over-assumption of dignity, and a tedious volubility in expounding the law, his decisions were regarded as just, and gave general satisfaction.

Jerry always refers to Professor Atkins, Dr. Mac Castle, and the coal operator—Smallwood—as "my boys." And in speaking of them he is fond of declaring:

"I brought them out. I worked wid them in school, and got them started in the upward way."

In their occasional reunions at Camerton, the

three "boys" are disposed to humor the old man's notion that their rise in the world is due to his patronage. This conceit affords him a deal of comfort, and it does them no particular harm.

THE END.

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